the DWB interview file

the best of the first 100 issues

compiled & edited by Gary Leigh

The DWB Interview File

The Best of the First 100 Issues No. 2

Introduction

ONE HUNDRED ISSUES in the making, *The DWB Interview File* has taken four solid months to prune, update and locate new and interesting photographs, making it an indispensable and worthy successor to *The DWB Compendium.* I hope you'll agree the wait has been worthwhile.

Of the many interviews conducted exclusively for DWB during its first decade, I have selected those which I felt - after a good deal of soul-searching! - are among the very finest, as well as an all-new bonus interview with Carole Ann Ford! Much had to be shed, regrettably (along with the intended inclusion of *Roger Delgado - A Tribute*), prompting the possibility of a third volume which would also take in some of the best articles penned by our contributors over the years (keep watching the pages of DWB for details...).

One of the most enjoyable aspects of compiling this book was getting reacquainted with various of the featured artists, many of whom were only too happy to update their respective sections. Our exhaustive hunt for fresh pictorial material also proved to be immensely satisfying, as these pages will demonstrate.

In an effort to tighten up the textual content, many of the interviews are presented as dialogues (i.e. the original questions have been removed and some of the interviews re-edited slightly to ensure that the words flow). I hope this has been achieved competently enough to prevent you spotting the joins! Please note that since DWB is, first and foremost, a television-based journal, only programme titles are highlighted in Reduced Capitals. Episode titles, feature films, stage plays etc. are in *italics.*

Enjoy! - ***Gary Leigh, March 1994.***

Acknowledgements

In the prepartion of this book, I would like to thank each of the following for generously providing their time to ensure that the content and depth is as complete and accurate as possible: *Anthony Ainley, Christopher Barry, J. Jeremy Bentham, Ian Stuart Black, Michael E. Briant, Peter Bryant, Tristram Cary, Anthony Clark, Tony Clark, Robert Cope, Daphne Dare, Paul Darrow, Terrance Dicks, Carole Ann Ford, Mervyn Haisman, Elaine at Hulton Deutsch, Gerald Harper, Louise Jameson, Robert Jewell, Dallas Jones, Michael Keating, Katy Manning, Richard O'Brien, Jacqueline Pearce, Andrew Pixley, Colin and Richard at Reprographic, Adrian Rigelsford, William Russell, Ian Scoones, John Scott Martin, Nabil Shaban, Dudley Simpson, Lalla Ward, Deborah Watling, and all of the people and companies credited overleaf.*

This book is dedicated to the memory of Graham Williams

Contents

Sydney Newman 5
William Russell 16
Carole Ann Ford 18
Christopher Barry 23
Robert Jewell & Kevin Manser 28
Ian Stuart Black 35
Gerry Davis 39
Alexandra (Sandra Reid) Tynan 46
Jack and John Lovell 51
Mervyn Haisman 54
Innes Lloyd 57
Deborah Watling 60
Bernard Bresslaw 63
Jon Pertwee 65
Katy Manning 72
Kenneth Sharp 75
Terrance Dicks 78
Michael E. Briant 84
Ian Scoones 88
Tom Baker 94
Louise Jameson 99
Graham Williams 101
Dudley Simpson 108
Lalla Ward 113
Anthony Ainley 117
Eric Saward 121
Graeme Harper 128
Colin Baker 133
Nabil Shaban 142
John Nathan-Turner 146
Sylvester McCoy 149
John Scott Martin 153
Milton Subotsky 158
Gareth Thomas 162
Michael Keating 164
Jacqueline Pearce 165
Paul Darrow 171
Gerald Harper 174
Richard O'Brien 177
The Best of the Rest: 180
Graeme McDonald, Daphne Dare, Tristram Cary, Peter Bryant, Michael Wisher, Peter Grimwade, Mike Kelt, Nicola Bryant

THE DWB INTERVIEW FILE
The Best of the First 100 Issues No. 2

ISBN 0 9522307 1 2

Compiled and edited by Gary Leigh
Interior design and layout by Brian J. Robb
Cover design by Gary Wales (Profile Ltd., Woking, Surrey)

Publication copyright © 1994 Gary Leigh

Photographs © The Author's Collection, Christopher Barry, Marion Breeze, Channel 4, Raymond Cusick, Carole Ann Ford, Robert Jewell, Richard Molesworth, Ian Scoones, Paul Vanezis, Hulton Deutsch Collection, Rex Features, Topham Picture Source, Alexandra Tynan, Press Association, The Cambridge Evening News.

Artwork © Phil Bevan, Andy Walke., Johnny Waudby.

Every effort has been made to trace the copyright holders of the illustrative material herein. In the event that we may have overlooked a clearance, we will be happy to rectify the situation.

Published in Great Britain by DreamWatch Publishing,
PO Box 1015, Brighton BN2 2YU.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission in writing of the Publisher.

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
The Reprographic Centre Ltd., Crawley, W. Sussex.

A catalogue record for this book is available from
The British Library.

- ALSO AVAILABLE IN THIS VOLUME: *The DWB Compendium*, a compilation of the very best reference material from the first one hundred issues of the award-winning *DreamWatch Bulletin*, fully revised, updated and beautifully illustrated with professional standard artwork and previously unpublished photographs. 136 pages, eight in full colour.

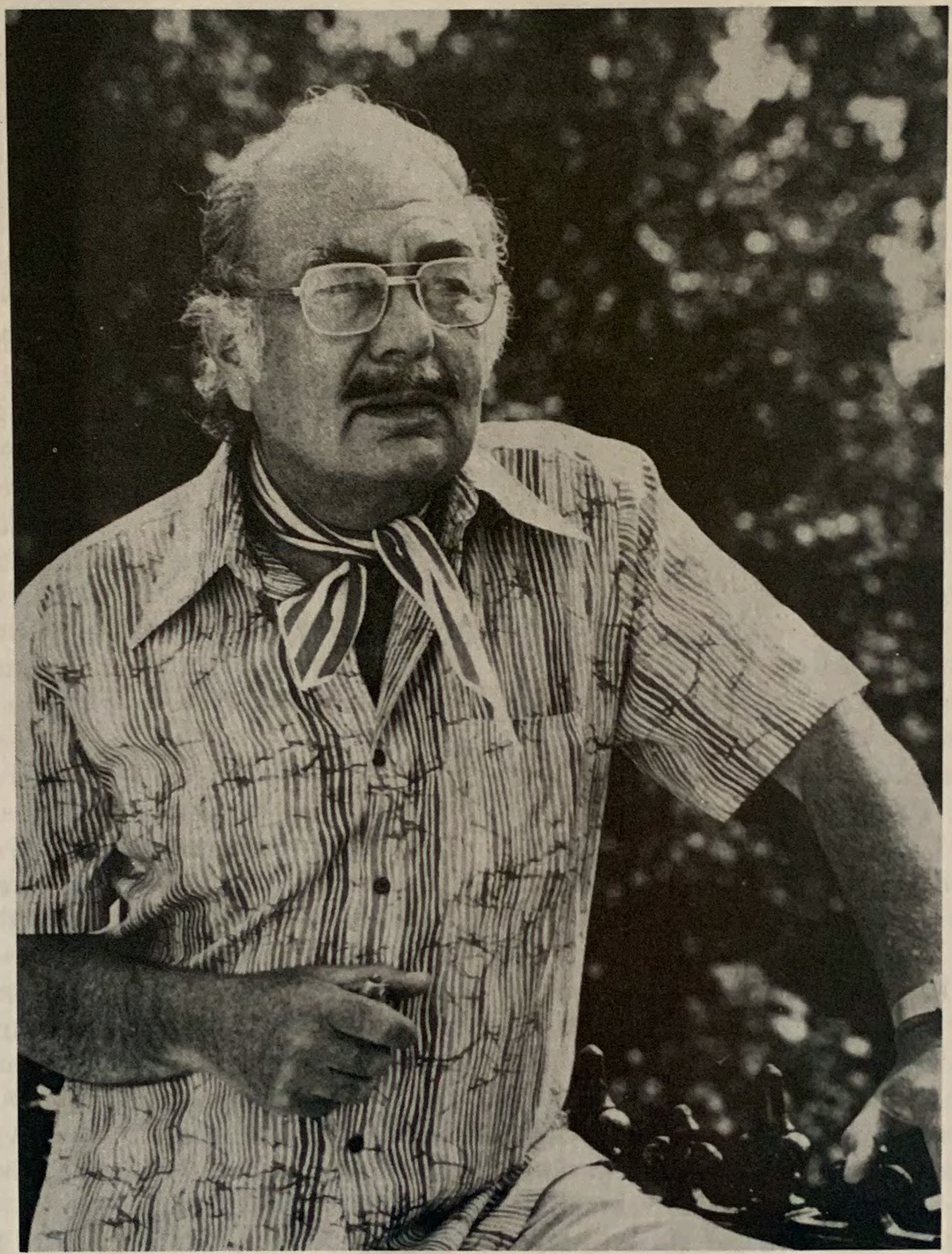
  To order your copy, send a crossed cheque or postal order payable to DreamWatch Publishing for £11.99 (inclusive of p+p) to: *The DWB Compendium, PO Box 1015, Brighton BN2 2YU.* (A limited hardbound edition of 250 numbered and signed copies - complete with linen finish, dust jacket and embossed in silver - are available at £16.99 each).

  Additional copies of *The DWB Interview File* are available at £13.99, or £18.99 for one of 500 signed, hardbound editions. Both hardbound editions are available at the special, inclusive rate of £34.
- TO SUBSCRIBE to *DreamWatch Bulletin* for one year (12 issues), send a crossed cheque or postal order payable to DWB for £33 (£36 for card-reinforced envelopes mailed first-class) to: *DWB Subscriptions, 5 Whitegate Gardens, Harrow-Weald, Middlesex HA3 6BW.* [OVERSEAS: America and Canada $69 ($79 for card envelopes) US$ checks only; Australia and New Zealand £42 (£49) sterling only; Ireland and rest of Europe £35 (£39) sterling only. All overseas subscription issues sent Airmail within one week of publication.]
- SPECIAL OFFER: If you would like to sample DWB, send a cheque/PO for £15 and five 1st class stamps and receive £25 worth of back issues, including the latest issue. To qualify for this offer, simply state where and when you purchased this book, and whether or not you are a new reader. Orders to the above address.

1963 the creator 1966

Sydney Newman

"I'm prouder of that sculpture than I am of DOCTOR WHO*!"* - August 1986



● *Strong language*

"AT THE age of eleven I made up my mind that I wanted to be an artist, a cartoonist. I managed to go to a specialist art school for poor kids and did very well (I was among the top three), but I flunked all the academic subjects - except English literature - so I didn't even graduate. I then tried to make a living as a fine painter but, being young and inexperienced, I couldn't sell my stuff. My family were very poor so I started doing some commercial art and some photographic work. I was also teaching children in art classes, and the guy who ran it was a rather famous Canadian painter called Arthur Lismer. He asked me to make a movie, but I'd never made a movie before and he said, 'Well, you're a photographer aren't you?' I said 'Yeah, but movies are quite different, and anyway, I haven't got a movie camera'. So he gave me a camera and I made a ten minute movie and I got absolutely hooked on what I call 'art in time'; a painting is a simultaneous thing, but film is art in time, and I just absolutely fell in love with it. To make the film I started reading all the books, and I then became so passionate about film-making I went to Hollywood, in 1938, to try to become a cinematographer.

I couldn't join the Cinematographers Union there - they wanted $5000 as an entrance fee because it was a closed shop, and of course I didn't have that - but then I got offered a job by the Walt Disney studios as an animator after taking an exhaustive test. They'd just finished *Snow White*, which was a fantastic success, and they were working on *Bambi*. I went back to Canada to re-enter the United States and I found I couldn't get a work permit. (Incidentally, on the way back to Canada I was arrested and put into an overnight jail in El Paso as a Mexican and then I got shipped out of the United States!). I wrote to Disney saying I couldn't take the job unless he wrote me a letter saying my talents were unobtainable in the United States, and they wrote back and said, 'Look, you're 21 years old, you can't expect to be regarded as unique, but we'll give you another test'. I did this in Toronto and it took me about four months. I did storyboards for four cartoons; one for Mickey Mouse, one for Donald Duck, one for Pluto, and the fourth I invented my own character. One of the storyboards that I did was the story of a Nazi submarine that comes into New York harbour, and I gave the periscope a moving eye and it sees the Statue of Liberty. That's the only part of the storyboard I can remember, but the interesting thing is that years later Disney made a film about a German submarine and the periscope was a roving eye! I'm not saying they stole it from me. Mind you, when you took a test they owned the rights to your test.

Each one of these tests involved about 100 drawings, so I did 400 drawings, 40 of which were in colour, and shipped them off on the assumption that they would accept me for their story and layout department (the Story Department is where the ideas are born, and the Layout Department in animation is where you lay out the concept which is then given to the animator to put into motion). Eventually they wrote back and said, 'Sorry, we think you're wonderful, but we can't really claim your talents are unobtainable in the United States, but if you can get a work-permit the first job will be open to you'.

My brother then found out that an American consul in a border town would put your name on the head of the list to enter the United States, provided you padded his palm with $700. Well, $700 in those days would be the equivalent of about $3000-4000 today and I didn't have that kind of money, so I went to work hard as a commercial artist. Prior to that as a commercial artist I would reject jobs I didn't like, but now I would accept anything that was thrown at me, and sure enough within two months I was earning

$100 a week, and for a period then I was one of the highest paid commercial artists in Canada. I gave my brother the $700 at the end of July 1939. Come the end of August and war is declared. A lot of my friends' families were sending their sons to the United States out of fear that there would be instant conscription, and I suddenly thought that if I got into the United States everyone would think I was running away from conscription. I just couldn't tolerate that, so I went to my brother and told him to get the $700 back and I continued earning quite a bit of money as a commercial artist.

Disney had a tremendous strike about a year after I couldn't get into the States and the company closed down for four months, then the strike was won or lost and about half a year later there was another strike that was so crippling that Walt Disney lost control of the company and it went into the hands of the New York bankers. Because I've always been left of centre politically, I would have been on the side of the strikers so I probably would have been fired. The other alternative is that I would have been drafted into the US Army and probably killed somewhere in the Pacific, so the luckiest thing that ever happened to me was being rejected by the United States!

I WENT to the cinema one day and saw a war propaganda film (you understand that at that time Canada had no film tradition of any sort), and looking at the credits I discovered it was made in Canada. Also on the credits was a former art critic who had done a very nice piece about my paintings for one of the papers, so I wrote to him and subsequently went to the National Film Board and became a film-maker in 1941.

I started out knowing nothing really about film — loads of theory but no practical experience at all. As the phrase goes, I didn't know my arse from a sprocket hole (they do say I have pretty pungent speech)! So I started as a splicer boy, and within six months — because of the urgencies of war — I directed my first film and it featured the Prime Minister of Canada, William MacKenzie King. Not only did I make this film after only six months apprenticeship in 35mm and only six minutes long, but it was also done in French and I didn't know a word of French!

> *"Because I've always been left of centre politically, I would have been on the side of the strikers so I probably would have been fired"*

After about two to three years I became a director, and gradually I became an executive producer in charge of all film productions for the cinema. At this point (about 1946-47) I was becoming very interested in the development of television, which was only just starting in the United States, and I saw it as the future - and as either the death or the revitalization of the Canadian National Film Board - so I went to the bosses saying I thought we ought to get into the whole television game and find out about it now. Eventually the Film Board sent me to New York (which is where television only really existed then in the USA) for a year, and I was actually on the staff of the NBC — The National Broadcasting Company — for thirteen months. The amusing thing was my passport which, because I was a Government employee, was stamped 'Foreign Agent'!

I fell in love with television in New York. I spent only about two weeks in the News Department at NBC, about four months in the Drama Department and about two months in the Light Entertainment Department, and so on. I spent a lot ot time in engineering and I was writing reports on all elements of television. I worked on the MILTON BERLE SHOW, the famous Sid Caesar comedy shows and the top PHILCO PLAYHOUSE, so I had this terrific background.

I came back to Canada and discovered that the Film Board was definitely not interested in television at all. My reports were being sent to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (their television service was going to hit the air around 1952) and my reports formed the basis of a lot of the television start-up practices there. CBC asked me to join them and I was one of their first twenty production employees, and for two years I was head of live television outside broadcasts (I did the biggest football games, some documentaries with Marshall McCluhan, and I was very involved with the Coronation of the Queen in 1953. CBC had a man in England to get the film and fly it across the Atlantic by bomber). I got fed up doing it because in each of the two years I averaged about 130 shows a year, which I produced, directed and wrote myself with tiny budgets compared to, say, drama or variety shows. It was a string and bailing wire operation in those days!

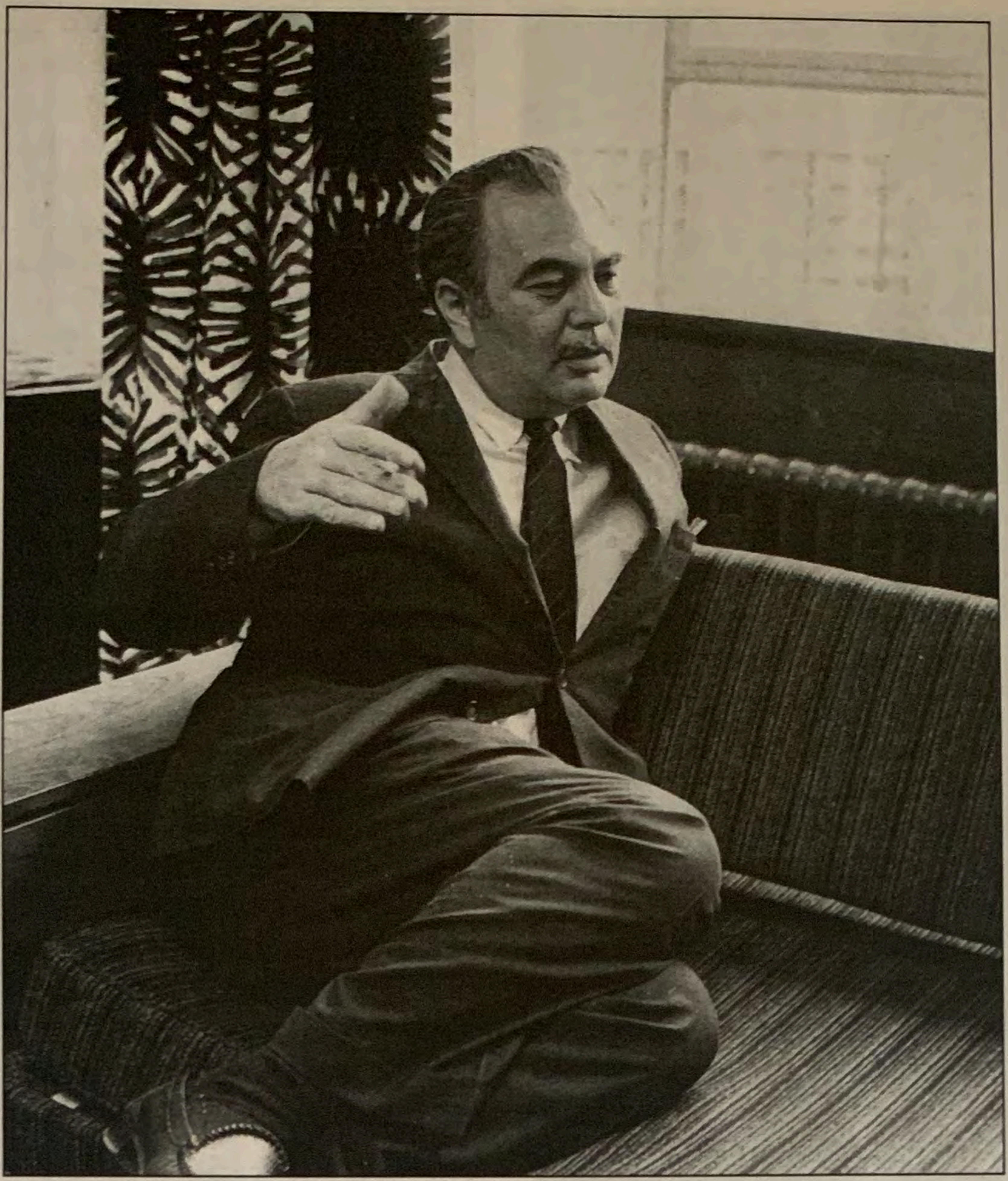
When the Head of Drama was promoted there was nobody else to take his place and so I volunteered. They asked me what I knew about drama and I said I knew nothing, except that I knew about lenses and film and had designed stage sets. They offered me the job for four months, and the four months became six, eight months and so on.

At the start I really didn't know anything about drama. I'd never worked with actors in my life as my background had been documentaries, and yet here, at the age of 37, I was getting involved in drama. The drama situation, as I found it in Canada, was that they were all done live, and the plays were either redone scripts from New York (with the place names changed to Canadian ones) and adaptions from stage plays (very little — hardly any — original writing at all), and I set out to change that. I said I wanted plays about Canada so I wanted Canadian playwrights. This programme we were doing was sponsored by General Motors and consisted of 39 one-hour dramas a year. I also did a half-hour series called ON CAMERA sponsored by Procter and Gamble, the soap manufacturers . The strictures they imposed on me — the censorship — you wouldn't believe!

I came up with about three writers who turned out to be pretty good, one of whom was Arthur Hailey of AIRPORT fame. I produced his first play - after it had been rejected by NBC and CBC in New York - because, like any Canadian then, you first try New York and not your domestic market. This was a fantastic success — *Flight into Danger* — which was the story of the big airplane with two choices of food on board, one fish and one meat, and everyone who has eaten the fish gets poisoned and the two pilots have both eaten the fish! It was a tremendous success. As a matter of fact the BBC bought that Kinescope and ran it in Britain and it got one of the highest ratings of any show. And that's how I got to England, because the BBC bought 26 of my Canadian dramas; my name was up every week for 26 weeks - *Sydney Newman, Supervising Producer.*

ON MY FIRST TRIP to England in 1957 I met Michael Barry, who was Head of Drama at the Beeb, and they were very sweet to me. It was on that occasion that I got a phone call from Dennis Vance's office at ABC Television (the predecessor of Thames) to ask if he could meet me. This charming, marvellous Scouse character was very big in England, and he said he was doing this series called ARMCHAIR MYSTERY THEATRE on Saturday nights and would I like to be the producer, and I said yes, subject to conditions, and I would be in touch.

So I flew back to Canada, thrilled to death at getting this job offer, because I had been Head of Drama at CBC for four years then - very successful, they were paying me well, no complaints. About two months later I got a telegram; 'Can you come to England to meet Howard Thomas, my managing director, and we'll pick up the tab on expenses?' So I returned to London and met Howard Thomas, they took me round the studios and I was introduced to the members of the Executive Board of Associated



As Head of Series and Serials at the BBC, 1965

British Pictures Corporation. We negotiated a fee of £5000 a year for Mystery Theatre, which was *big* money in those days and exactly equal to what I was getting in Canada.

So then the die was cast. I left the CBC, there were lots of parties for me, and my wife and I came over on the Empress of England (our three girls were flown over three weeks later) and we had one of the four suites, because I said 'We're going first class all the way!' It was the end of March1958 and the Atlantic was never rougher - for the five-day trip we met a force nine gale! We were met at Liverpool, where the ship docked, and then brought down to London and put up at a dreadful hotel. Three days after my arrival Dennis was promoted and Howard Thomas was made the Head of Drama.

ABC Television had the franchise only for Saturdays and Sundays for the Midlands and the North, Birmingham, Manchester and Yorkshire. The set-up at ABC was that, as elsewhere in Britain, there was no such thing really as a producer. The terms producer and director seemed to be interchangeable, and while Dennis Vance was in charge of the whole drama output at ABC — he was nominally in charge of Armchair Theatre — that did not mean much more than selecting plays and scheduling directors. There wasn't such a thing as a producer as somebody who exercises some kind of editorial influence or even stylistic influence on what the director does. In short there was no separation of those functions and most directors were calling themselves producers, which came, I suppose, as a residue from radio.

So all I was involved with there was Armchair Theatre on a Sunday night (during the summer we ran an Armchair Mystery Theatre), then there was the occasional children's serial, and then I devised a series which was, of course, The Avengers. This was over a four-year period at ABC — it was really a very small operation compared with the BBC which was enormous.

I set out on a policy of finding out about England, about which I knew damn little except the usual myths. I found myself a marvellous story editor called Peter Luke, whom I trained because he did not really know much about plays. He was actually a literary critic doing a page of book reviews for *The Queen* magazine every two weeks for which he got paid £25 a time, so when I offered him £1100 with a full time job as a story editor he grabbed it and turned out to be one of the best things I ever did. He was a wonderful guy. He wrote the West End play *Hadrian the Seventh* and later it was he who brought me Harold Pinter whose first play - *A Night Out* - I produced. There was also Alun Owen, who wrote *No Trams To Lime Street*, *Lena Oh My Lena* and other famous plays; Angus Wilson, one of the great English writers; and we mustn't forget one of the best, Clive Exton.

My whole purpose was to dramatize the turning points in this country, which was in a kind of post-Suez trauma; the revelation of what England was really like. To learn about this country I insisted, for the first couple of years, that I and my family took holidays in Britain, so we went to Cornwall, Wales and Scotland. We learnt about England because I didn't want my directors to say, 'Newman, you're full of shit, you don't know what you're talking about, you're just an arrogant Canadian...' To me it wasn't extraordinary or marvellous or innovative, but suddenly people were saying, 'Gee, you're doing stuff about the working class'.

I didn't try to pick up anything from any existing writer or school. I went my own way. I went into what was condescendingly called 'kitchen sink drama' — we went onto the factory floors, into union halls and really got down to what I thought was really gutsy stuff that related to my audience, because television in those days was an audience of the working class. The intellectuals and the rich looked down on television, even BBC (BBC Radio was sacred though).

What I was doing was two things; I was pleasing my bosses enormously because I was talking to the very people who were buying the stuff in the ads, and I was pleasing myself because I was genuinely expressing the guts of England. Another thing I did was I varied the plays. It wasn't all kitchen sink drama — it was a great variety; I did a murder mystery one week, a comedy the next, a gutsy thriller the third week and a kitchen sink drama the fourth.

One thing I set out to do was to follow the assumption that my audience was as smart as I was — they were just simply not as educated! Consequently I aimed the plays, the style, the way they were done, at an audience that had the same cultural background. In short, I wouldn't give them Ibsen or Shakespeare or even Noel Coward, the West End favourite. I didn't jump up and down in the schedule between high culture one week and low culture the next. They were all equal culturally and went through all strands of society.

I dominated the situation. I put the directors — the ones I liked — under exclusive contracts so they couldn't work for anyone else, I did the same with writers and paid them well (we paid much better than anyone else, I made sure of that), and I was involved with each and every production at key points. I knew more about the script than the director did when he was first given the script because I had been working with Peter Luke and the writer for months on it, but once the director got hold of it he of course would get to know it much better than me. He'd have to expand it in practical and real terms. I was involved in the casting of only the two or three leads, and then I would go to the first rehearsal reading of the play. I wouldn't look at the sets, that was all up to the director. For rehearsals I worked out a system of signals so the director could show me whether he was going to do a close-up, a medium-shot or a long-shot, and I also insisted he snap his fingers to indicate the cuts from one camera to another to make sure that the right image was on the screen.

My main four directors were Ted Kotcheff, Philip Savile, Alan Cooke and Charlie Jarrott. I had the same group of writers more or less and I had the most marvellous designers, so I had a small team in that Teddington shop that were just fantastic and we ruled the roost. Out of 40 or so plays I did in each of the four years, in my second, third and fourth years we were in the top ten 37 out of 40 times. Critically, as well, we were succeeding — the reviews were fantastic.

Honor Blackman in her "kinky boots", with Anneke Wills (far right) in the season three episode *Dressed to Kill* (December 1963)

Scen
THE FILTE
CIGARE

Patrick MacNee as John Steed and Ian Hendry as Dr David Keel, *The Avengers* (1961)

THE AVENGERS came about purely accidentally, like all great ideas! A writer called Julian Bond and his agent came to me, and he had the brilliant idea of doing this half-hour drama series about a police surgeon which would exploit the best of Dixon of Dock Green and Emergency Ward 10, two popular things on the air in those days. I commissioned him to write thirteen episodes and we cast Ian Hendry as the emotionally tender and rather physically agile police surgeon who gets involved in all sorts of shenanigans. I had discovered that Ian Hendry had just come out of National Service and was an expert in motor cycle trick riding (he used to put on shows doing handstands while the bike was doing sixty miles per hour), so we used this in the character.

But the network didn't really like Police Surgeon and they scheduled it at 7.00pm on Saturday evenings which was the wrong slot. The central character was too nice to draw the audiences, so I got an idea for a new series, teaming him up with a much more active good guy villain. We planted the idea that the Ian Hendry character was in love with his secretary, she gets murdered and the crooks are caught with the aid of a mysterious bowler-hatted gentleman played by Patrick MacNee - who I'd used when he acted in Canada - a kind of MI5 James Bond. The whole concept of The Avengers grew out of Police Surgeon, and Ian's physical dexterity - which was carried through to the character marvellously played by Honor Blackman - made it succeed; the first womens' lib character, even in a popular series! Leonard White is probably more of an expert on the precise history because he was the producer of both series although I devised The Avengers.

That was the era of *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* and the James Bond books, and I wanted to send up that kind of genre — to take the mickey out of all this MI5 bullshit - so I created this character (Steed), a ruthless cold killer who's totally amoral. Opposite him is this desperately human guy who wouldn't hurt a fly unless he has to and certainly doesn't like what he's doing, but these two form a partnership and there's active dislike between the two on moral grounds although they like one another as men.

Both men became tremendously popular and the show really succeeded, but then a film company offered Ian a deal he couldn't refuse and so he signed a long-term film contract and said he was going to leave the series. We had a winner and Patrick loved it and he wanted to stay on, so what was I to do? I decided to replace Ian, but with what kind of character?

At that time there was a lot of trouble in Kenya with the Mau Mau and I happened to see this newsreel in which this 40-year-old matronly woman on a Kenyan settler's farm was in the kitchen with a baby strapped to her back, and around her rather thickish waist was this great big revolver in a holster. She was being interviewed by the newsreels and saying, 'Well, I was in the kitchen cooking, just as you see me now, and suddenly I heard screaming from next door and then these two black bodies came shooting through the kitchen, out the back door and disappeared. I went in and there was my husband with his throat cut and my two children decapitated'. I looked at that woman with a gun on her hip and a baby on her back telling about the death of her whole family. What a dame, I thought. I remember describing this newsreel in my memorandum, I said we should turn him (Ian Hendry) into a woman but make sure the chemistry is exactly the same - she should disapprove of Patrick MacNee and she should be adept physically. We wrote in that she was the wife of a Kenyan settler and that she had been an anthropologist (this was also the time of Elsa the lioness), and when her husband and kids were killed she came back to London and was working at the London Museum where Patrick MacNee first meets her.

We also sent up the spy world and it became a fantastic success, and an accidental kinky success too, because when we did the television run first we actually saw Honor's briefs when she kicked one of the villains! This of course we couldn't have (not in those days), so I said 'For chrissakes, let's design some costumes for her so this won't happen'. Leather was coming in so we got a designer who designed these high-fashion leather pants and slit skirts that horsewomen wear and this became a fetish, faddish kind of thing. But it was really the chemistry between this very moral person and this amoral guy who was charming and wanted to lay her all the time and she wouldn't have any of it that was the basis of THE AVENGERS, and it took off and became a fabulous success. It was just a fun thing on my part — its social content was limited to sending up all the things about spies and chicanery of all sorts.

I didn't give a damn when they went into all that fantasy stuff later on (though of course Diana Rigg was always so delicious to look at!). Patrick was always so charming and effective and confident, and he eventually became a suave. I think the filmed episodes lost some of the early guts. I had nothing to do with those and I never got a bit of the residual rights (nor do I get a penny for having created DOCTOR WHO). Mind you, ABC paid me well, no complaints. I was in Toronto when they were shooting THE NEW AVENGERS and I think they were not nearly as good. I thought the young man, Gambit, was very charming, but he was the fifth wheel. The format didn't call for him and they could have built the same chemistry between Joanna Lumley, who was very attractive, and Patrick.

Once THE AVENGERS got going under Leonard White's producership I might have said to him, as Head of Drama, 'That was a stinking episode' or 'That was a wonderful show', and every now and then Patrick and Honor would insist on seeing me to complain about the scripts, but they'd see me not as the deviser of the series but as the Head of Drama. I really had nothing to do with THE AVENGERS after the first four or five episodes, after which Leonard White so successfully ran it, as did Verity Lambert with DOCTOR WHO. To me it was just one of hundreds of shows I was responsible for, and I think if any credit is due me I found good people; I gave them my trust and they rarely let me down. They went their own way and whatever it was I assigned them to do became an expression of themselves. That is a cardinal principle, and as I look back at my long career I think it's my strongest point; that I know how to find good people and let them go their own way within obviously defined boundaries.

ONE DAY I got a letter from Kenneth Adams, the Managing Director of BBC Television, saying would I meet him, so I did. He said, 'Well, you know our major drama is on Sunday night, we'd like you to be the producer', and I said, 'You must be joking! Why should I go to you to produce a drama series that I'm already producing on Sunday nights for a company in which I'm very, very happy?' I thanked him for a lovely lunch and he said we must do this again and I said of course and we parted very amicably. About a week later I got a phone call from Mr. Adams' office inviting me to lunch again, and he said, 'So you're not interested in doing this thing on Sunday nights?', and I said 'No, I won't repeat myself'. 'Would you be interested in becoming Head of Drama?', and I said, '*Now* you' re talking!'

But I had a firm contract with ABC which had another eighteen months to go, and Associated British Pictures Corporation (which owned ABC) wouldn't let me go to their opposition. I was angry and upset and thought it was very unkind and cruel because it never occurred to me that you keep a guy against his wishes in a creative job. I remember threatening the executives and saying, 'You'd better watch me because I'm going to use a four-letter word on the air!' I was so stupidly angry at that time. I phoned the BBC and told them they'd better forget about me, but Kenneth called back and said, 'We'll wait for you'. I said, 'You'll wait eighteen months for *me*?' He said, 'Yes, the Director General thinks you're worth waiting for', and they waited and ABC let me go fourteen months later, so for fourteen months I worked in chains.

I nearly had a nervous breakdown over the fact that ABC wouldn't let me go. I kept the standard up because I wasn't going to besmirch my name. As a matter of fact I would say some of my best work was done in the last year because it was just getting better the whole time. It took me about a year to achieve something close to what I wanted to do and then I sustained that and then built on it.

Patrick MacNee and Diana Rigg celebrate on 24th November 1965 with the news that THE AVENGERS has been sold to the American Broadcasting Company, a deal exceeding one million dollars

I went to the BBC on December 12th, 1962. I took the job because it gave me scope in areas of drama that had never been allowed to me before. I had never done opera and I suddenly had opera. I had always shunned classics, and here I was at the BBC responsible for the classics. We did twice-weekly soaps at the Beeb and I had never been involved in that before - a whole range of series! My main task was to strike a balance between high cultural tastes and vast average popular tastes, and plays for the young to the aged to cover the whole United Kingdom. It was a matter of finding a balance between all these tastes and at the same time pushing forward to be the most creative and discerning about the changing moral and political climate, the changing relationships between minister and parishioner, between union boss and members, and so on. I wanted to be the best and I wanted big audiences — I wasn't doing closet drama for a small little select group. My whole life's been devoted to mass media, to mass audiences. I wanted *viewers*. The BBC didn't have to tell me that. The BBC was a vast organisation and one of profound tradition. I am terribly proud of my years at the BBC and absolutely love the place. I may have slightly different attitudes to it today, but certainly in my day it was tremendous. The inspiration that came down from Hugh Greene, the Director General, and the wonderful people he found to put in charge was fantastic.

Once there I discovered a rather rigid operation with too many of the directors old and stuck in their ways, where cameras never moved (they moved between shots but never on air!). But the BBC liked me and I was able to do whatever I wanted really. I inherited a staff of 175 people and we were doing about 300 dramas a year of all kinds. The first week I came to the BBC I went to my first weekly Programme Review meeting, in which all the departmental heads meet and review the success or failure of the previous week's programmes, and also give a foretaste of what's coming up the following week, and on this one there was someone who had produced a very successful series called Face To Face, which had John Freeman doing these wonderful interrogations, a brilliant show. Believe it or not of all the countries the producer chose to go to was Canada. I'm sitting here hearing this man making a speech about my country, and one of the things he says is, 'It's so cold in winter it just freezes your knackers!', or something like that.

He continued, 'Their cities have these long, straight streets and the wind comes charging down - you'd think they'd have the sense to put bends in these streets to kill the wind'. I'm sitting there fulminating about this idiot (nice guy, I learnt later, but I didn't know him at that point), and then there were questions asked and I stood up and said, 'I am very amused and interested to hear this story. Absolutely true — Canada is very cold in winter and the streets very straight. But I want to state that most Canadian cities, particularly the one he talked about, were designed by *British* army engineers in the last century to march their armies down straight lines!' They loved it, and that, incidentally, was one of the best things I did instinctively, because it declared me as a man of individual opinions who would stand up and speak straight, and this was the BBC senior staff's first acquaintanceship with me. After that I never looked back!

The real growth in the BBC by the time I arrived was the big development in the Current Affairs Department. They were setting up That Was The Week That Was and Panorama was the big current affairs show. Drama was way, way down the list, a backwater; occasionally good stuff but larely dramatisations and old-fashioned stuff like stage plays, dramatisations from novels, children's classics...very honourable but ho hum. Many of the directors were stylistically old-fashioned — some had actually directed TV in the pre-war days! And there was no producer system! Here was this mass of 175 people all relating to one man (me!). I said I couldn't control 175 people, so I split it up into three departments; Single Plays, Series (like Z Cars, which I inherited), and then a Serials Department (the BBC have since amalgamated Series and Serials). The next thing I did was I completely eliminated the Script Department. I set up the three departments with a head of each department and a very tiny administrative staff; a secretary, a business manager, and under him I appointed/created seven or eight producers, and I gave each producer a story editor and two or three directors. I then had a manageable thing that I could control.

> *" When I got to the BBC . . . I was asked 'Could we do another kind of children's drama which would sustain the ratings and start building towards Saturday evening?' "*

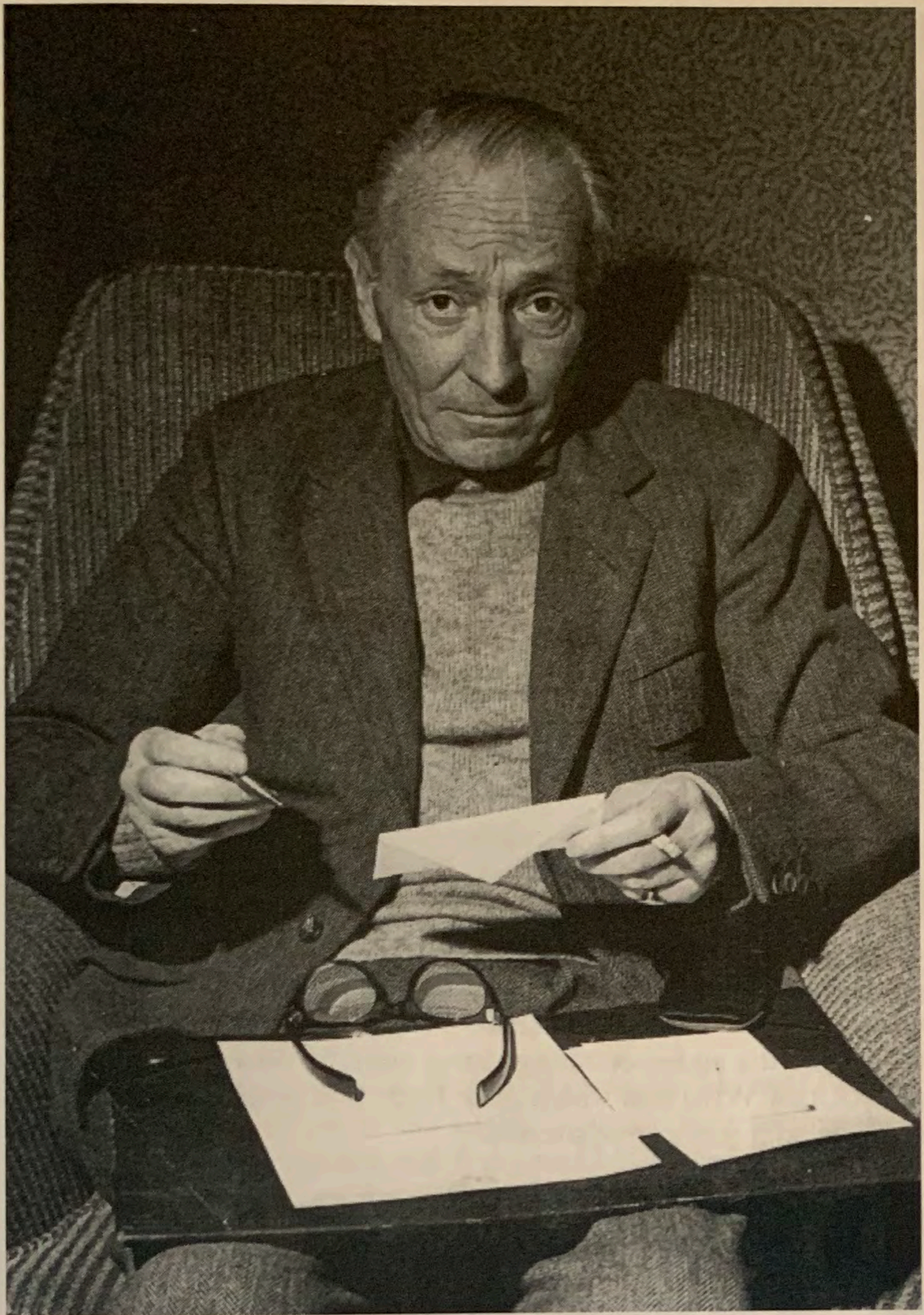
I set up a situation at the BBC where to produce or direct a Single Play was a pinnacle of creative success. I'd usually start people off in the Serials Department, gradually move them into the Series Department and then up into Single Plays. What eventually happened was that Serials, for example, became so good that the level of status in my whole group was literally the same; from the director on Doctor Who to Kenneth Loach on a Wednesday Play. Waris Hussein, who's one of today's most stylish directors, was the original director of Doctor Who. I decided that I would confine myself to producing one show a year. In fact in my four years I produced three shows which I'd commissioned; a fine Irish play by Hugh Leonard called *Stephen D*, Harold Pinter's *The Tea Party*, and an opera - Berthtold Brecht's *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahogany*.

But the *real* breakthrough in the BBC came when I was told that they were going to start up a new channel called BBC2. To prepare for it I was allowed an increase in staff of 40% and an increase of productions of 40%. Well, that opened the door for the influx of almost my entire Armchair Theatre directorial and story-editing staff who came across the street and joined me at the BBC. Peter Luke came across and I made him a producer, ditto Irene Shubik, Ted Kotcheff, Alan Cooke, Charlie Jarrott...they all came across to join me because now there were positions open. The opening of Channel 2 meant that all the kids who were junior directors, floor managers, or who were in subsidiary roles waiting to get a chance to direct were given that chance because I could promote them. This 40% was what changed the whole scene in the Beeb for me because I don't know whether I would have succeeded had it not been for the influx of new people and the promotion upwards of young people. I was in the right big organisation at the right time — the creation of BBC2 — with the right director general and the right ebullient fighting back spirit (they were then being beaten hollow by commercial television).

The golden age of television drama was really the last year of the Fifties and the Sixties. I don't think terribly much of it today. For one thing there isn't much of it. There's no such thing as a solid Sunday night Armchair Theatre or a Wednesday Play. The big change took place when the directors wanted to go onto film, and so by doing the whole production thing changed — you were going to be shooting it over a period of weeks and weeks. Secondly the producers lost control because there is only room for one eye behind the viewfinder of a film camera, and the cost escalated tremendously so therefore fewer dramas can be done. The weekly slot for Play For Today, The Wednesday Play or whatever does not exist in England anymore and the writers have to make their money by writing series which is a different thing altogether. It's not lesser writing but it's a different kind. I am not impressed. Going on film the director becomes too vain, he falls in love with the shot and therefore the plays are too slow. They rely on mood and pretty cinematography. It just becomes a yawn and the series has no drive and very little dialogue, but there's nothing wrong with that. If the thing is visually very expressive it will be good.

WHEN I got to the BBC there was a drop in ratings on Saturday afternoons between the top-rated sports coverage and Juke Box Jury, and I was asked 'Could we do another kind of children's drama which would sustain the ratings and start building towards Saturday evening?' When I was seven-eight years of age I was reading fairy tales, I soon graduated to Dickens and Wells, and by the time I was fifteen I'd read Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain*, *Joseph In Egypt*, Dostoyevsky, Hemingway and stuff like that. I loved murder mysteries and I read an enormous amount of science fiction, the classics like Asimov and Clarke, who I found rather heavy but solid. I always had a love for sci-fi, and in fact at ABC did a series called Out Of This World with Irene Shubik as story editor (who later produced Out Of The Unknown for me at the Beeb), which had Boris Karloff come in and do the topping and tailing of each science fiction story.

I thought of a time/space machine, and the cute thing about it was the fact that it was to be a very common place object. It could have been an old car or anything. I've never claimed that the police telephone box was my idea, only that it be a kind of space machine that would be small and common place on the outside and that it would be enormous on the inside. All this got put down in a memorandum which is probably buried in the archives somewhere. The other thing I definitely put into the memorandum was that we mustn't lose the children, this is the BBC, we've got to be clean



William Hartnell poses for a pre-launch DOCTOR WHO photocall (21st November 1963)

and educational. That's why I wanted it to be a time machine, to go back into history and to dramatise history with our contemporary characters observing and being part of the changes in the world.

That was number one. Number two was that it would be driven by an old man of 760 years of age who had fled from outer space where his planet had been taken over by some horrible enemies. I wanted a crotchety, old guy who really is acutely intelligent and intrinsically kind, but as an old, senile man he's more impatient with his own incompetence which he takes out on others around him and that's what made him interesting to watch. He wasn't the dynamic hero they make him to be today, he had frailities. Because he was partly senile he didn't know how to use the machine properly — he was trying to get back to his planet and he didn't know how, and that was how he turned up on Earth. During the whole of the first year or two — when I had any say over the series — the Earth companions always wanted to get back to Earth, but this old fart wanted to get back to his home but he didn't know how to use this blasted machine, and so they ended up either in outer space or backward in history or forward in history. (This should not be in any way confused with a series at ABC we did called PATHFINDERS IN SPACE, which was about a girl and her father and a mad scientist, the latter played by that wonderful actor George Coulouris).

I was always a great believer in points of identification, and therefore if you are doing a series for kids you have to have a child in it so you have a 14-year-old girl. You wanted adult viewers too so we had two schoolteachers with the potential for a love interest, and for the grandparents and older viewers there was this irascible old man. Since the question in discussions was always 'Who was he?' and 'Where did he come from?', he was called Doctor Who. (These are just practical, ordinary, showbiz notions if you've got a feeling for your audience). The wonderful chemistry of these contrasting characters - the naivety of a 14-year-old girl, the two intellectually aware adults who are intelligent and good looking, and this old bugger - and their ignorance when they go back to Ancient Rome or the shores of England when Caesar lands, was really terribly exciting to me.

Verity Lambert, 27, the youngest producer at the BBC is revealed to the press as the producer of an exciting new Saturday teatime sci-fi series

So that's how it came about, and the best thing I ever did on DOCTOR WHO was to find Verity Lambert, who had been one of eight or nine production assistants that I had at ABC Television. I looked over who to give the job to at the BBC and I did not think that anyone was particularly right, and I remembered Verity as being bright and, to use the phrase, full of piss and vinegar - she was gutsy and she used to fight and argue with me, even though she was not at a very high level as a production assistant. I phoned her up and said, 'Do you want to be a producer?', and she said, 'You bet!', so she came across and I gave her DOCTOR WHO.

I introduced Verity to Donald Wilson, my Head of Series, and I don't think he quite liked her at first. She was too good looking, too smart Alec-ky and too commercial television minded, and he was a rather snooty, typical BBC pipe-smoking type. Wonderful guy though; I got to know him and to really love him and he really came into his own. He had been the Head of the Script Department, and I'm not ashamed of admitting that it was a piece of cunning to give him the post of production boss after killing his department (that's why the writing level was always so good in the Serials Department, because he was basically a writer - he was the producer and writer of at least half the episodes of the enormously successful THE FORSYTE SAGA). I would say that the people who influenced DOCTOR WHO the most were me, Verity - who I would give most of the credit without any question - and Donald Wilson, and then the magic of the group mechanics; of Waris Hussein as the first director, the designers, composers, and of course its first

***The Aztecs* (1964)**

cast. As I've always said, ideas are a dime a dozen. Anybody can get an idea but it's what you do with it, and I did the right things with it and the biggest right thing was getting Verity.

Anyway, Verity went to work, and I think she got on quite well with Donald Wilson after a while. I read the first storyline (*The Giants*), which I didn't particularly like, and I think we dropped it and went onto another one. Then it was a question of casting it. That was a brainwave to find William Hartnell because up to then he had achieved tremendous popularity as the vicious sergeant in The Army Game and he usually played nasty people. But even Verity cocked it up by allowing the girl to become his niece (*sic*) — it was so *stupid* to have imagined a character like Doctor Who being randy as well, in a children's series to boot! They pulled that thing on me and I was livid with anger.

Another major consideration was the format. I said that no story should run more than between four and six episodes. It was caution on on my part because if you lay an egg in your first episode the audience doesn't come back the next week, so if you're only designing your stories to last four weeks you've always got another story soon to get them back. That was a very innovative thing — I don't think it has ever been done before. At the BBC I received money from two sources; Channel One and Channel Two. I simply made out a budget for Doctor Who considering the time of the day it went out and its importance and so on and that's what they had to work with. I was responsible for the budget on all the shows. I had a marvellous business manager, John Keeble, who is now Controller of Finance at BBC Enterprises.

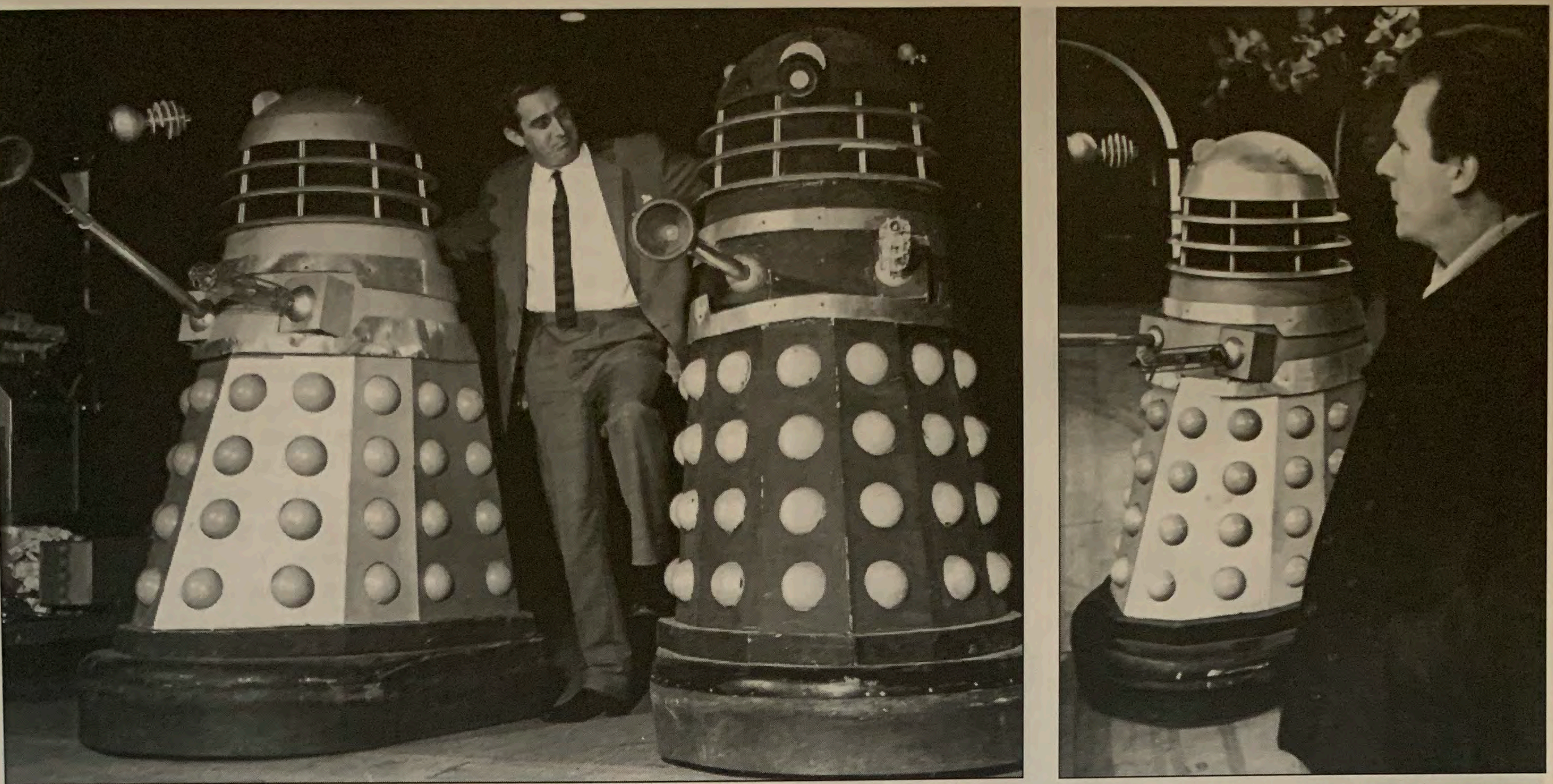
Another thing I definitely laid down the law about — and it is in my memo — was that there should be *no* bug-eyed monsters. I said, 'That's cheap science fiction', and then of course Verity comes up with the Daleks and I was so angry with her. I remember seeing the first Dalek episode on Saturday afternoon and I phoned her up immediately and I said, 'I want to see you in my office on Monday morning!!' I really ripped into her. I said, 'You've betrayed the whole concept - there were to be *no* damned bug-eyed monsters, and it's *cheap*, Verity, it's *cheap* science fiction!!' She was protesting at the top of her voice but feeling guilty, and she blurted out that these were actually human beings who were so far advanced that their bodies had atrophied. The one we did where they invade London was so wonderful — there was such an immediacy to anybody who lived in London. I mean, I loved it and I grew to love the Daleks like everybody else!

I think Raymond Cusick has been very much under-publicised. A sheer genius! The conception was good, but the execution was spectacular, and of course Verity, David Whitaker and Terry Nation made the conflict between the creatures and Earthlings marvellous. The designer is the genius there, but he didn't get anymore than I did for devising Doctor Who because he was on staff and so was I. I haven't got thanked by the BBC either. It's part of my job. You don't get thanked for doing your job. You get praised for doing it well, but you don't get thanked. I think it is unfair. Mind you, in big organisations you have to worry about things like precedent. If they start crediting in financial terms to staff members, where do you draw the line? What is the division between the salary you earn and the extras? They gave me increases when I never asked for them. I signed a contract, I never asked for raises in my five years in the BBC and yet regularly got them. They needn't have done that. So, from an administrative viewpoint, it's understandable about this mythical, strange, ephemeral line between super contributions or some contribution you make as a matter of fact which, historically, turns out to be a gigantic success. I think the BBC are wrong for not giving Ray a bonus or a gratuity, which *wouldn't* have set a precedent.

Verity loved the series and she was a real pro, and whether she liked the script or not she knew she had to make the script work, which is what any good producer does. Of course the irony as the years went by was that it was the Daleks which made the series the rage that it did become. It also gradually squeezed out the use of going back in history so that over the years Verity did fewer and fewer, and then when it moved to Innes Lloyd they were eventually dropped because there was definitely a drop in the ratings. It was a mistake because some of them were really fun, for example the one we did about Nero fiddling while Rome burned. Some of them were terrific. It was this amalgam of the past, the present and so on that made the audience ratings carry straight through from sports to Doctor Who and which gave Juke Box Jury a terrific lift t start off, so it was a great success.

PRODUCERS should never get stale and tired because producer gets regenerated with every new project h does. It all depends really on the individual. I thin Dixon of Dock Green had the same producer an directors for 15 years! There is no rule about tha Producers might get tired with the same genre (maybe Joh Nathan-Turner was brilliant when he started off?). These kind o problems were really fundamentally solved by Donald Wilson. H was one of my three Heads of Department and I used to mee these three heads every Monday morning and also a private sessio with each of them during the week. It would come up that Verit wants to move on, and he's thinking of John Wiles and I'd ask what he's done. He'd tell me and I'd say okay. How else do you run it? I had 73 directors, 26 producers and 33 story editors. I picked Verity in the beginning because Donald was new and he'd never run a production department. He'd been Head of the Script Unit and became Head of Serials around April or May of 1963, and it's bound to take a while to figure out this new responsibility. I had gotten to know the directors, though Donald knew them in many ways better than I, but I just didn't feel confident that I could get the kind of fresh originality from anyone that I knew at that time at the BBC.

Andrew Osborne was Head of Series and he, too, was inexperienced in administration and we all learned together really. I can't describe to you those wonderful people, it was just thrilling. I was like a little boy with a lollipop in my hand, and for me to associate with someone like Huw Wheldon who was so cultured and educated (I'm a very uneducated person — I never got my 11+!)... When they hired me, imagine how revolutionary it was. Traditionally, guys at my level are usually Oxford, Cambridge, Eton and all that — you'd *never* get this type of vulgar, crude colonial (as I was actually called) when I first came to England! But to deal with people like David Attenborough — a beautiful man, so knowledgeable, gentle and pleasant - and Grace Wyndham Goldie at Current Affairs (what a dynamic old tyrant she was, but so inspiring) and all the wonderful people who grew up under her supervision, includ-



As members of staff, Sydney Newman and Raymond Cusick (right, at *The Daily Mail* Boys and Girls Exhibition, 1964/65) received slaps on the back while the BBC and Terry Nation (left, during the recording of *The Dalek Invasion of Earth,* 1964) laughed all the way to the bank

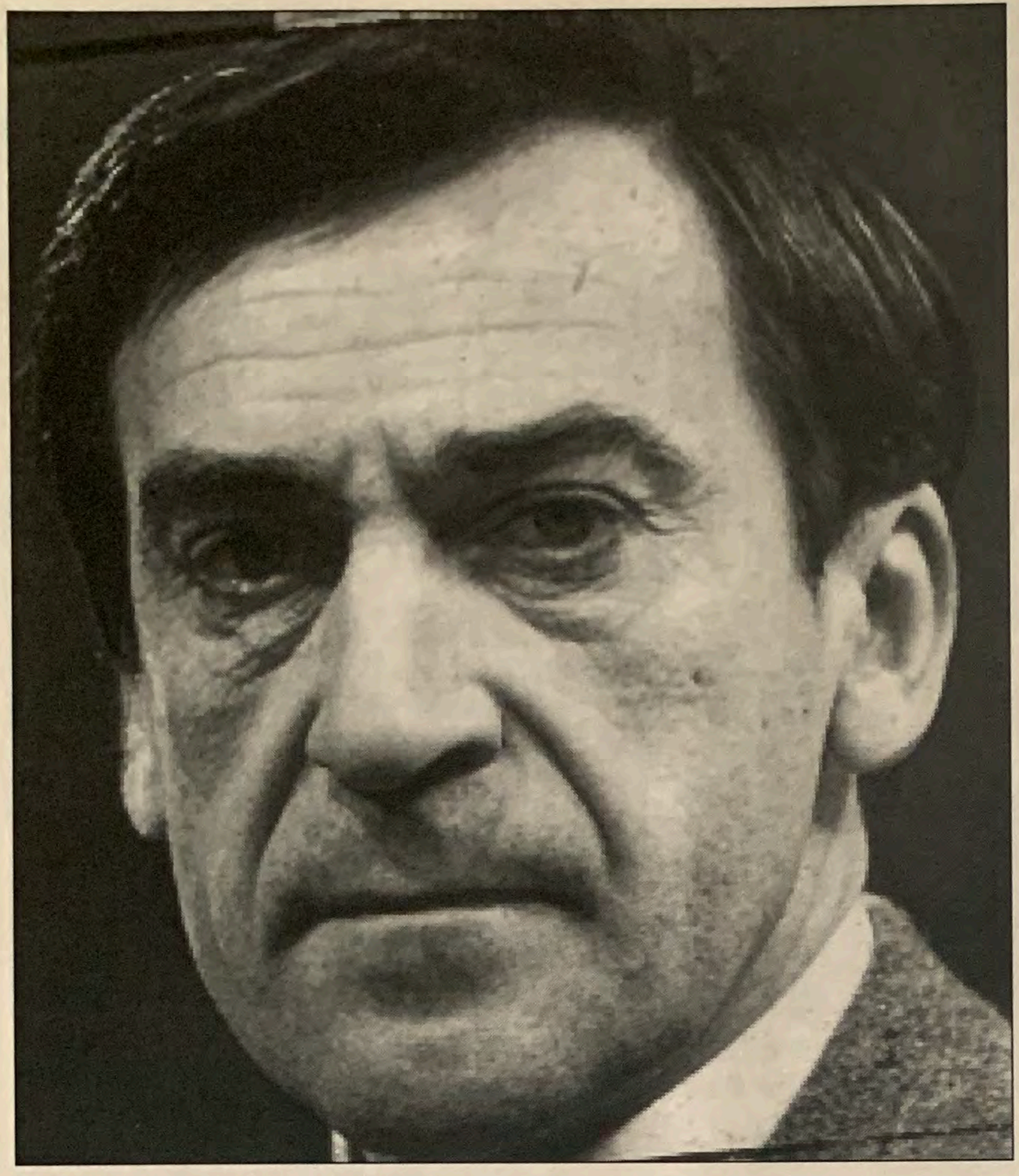
ing Paul Fox, Alasdair Milne, Donald Baverstock, Michael Peacock and many others. Then in the Light Entertainment section there was a charming, delightful, old-fashioned boss called Tom Sloane, delightful man, and yet the most revolutionary things were done under him, like the Hancock stuff, Till Death Us Do Part, Steptoe and Son... The place was germinating with excitement. I never wanted to go home at night, all those brilliant minds...

After doing The Newcomers, Verity moved on to Adam Adamant Lives! which I created, but it didn't give me the ratings I really wanted and I killed it after 26 weeks. I didn't create Adam Adamant Lives! to kill The Avengers. Maybe it was slotted against it but I had nothing to do with slotting. Adam Adamant Lives! was a brilliant idea and again it was a time-shift thing - the story of an Edward detective who is frozen in a block of ice by a Moriarty-type villain and who comes back to life in the 1960s. And you know what inspired me with that idea? Mary Whitehouse! She was kicking the shit at me and guys like me. To her I was the greatest purveyor of plays of dirt, doubt and disbelief, and I was trying to-understand this woman and what she was on about. I thought she was mistaken in trying to force Victorian ideas on us today - she's not part of this world! - and from that thinking I said, 'Damn, I'm going to see if she's right and make fun out of Victorian ideas in the 20th Century!' I created this Sherlock Holmes/Sexton Blake character (I actually tried to buy the rights to Sexton Blake) and put this Victorian, patriotic, idealistic, highly moral character right into the corruptions of the 20th Century, and it didn't succeed. It called for some pretty fancy writing and I think we failed scriptwise and a few other reasons, and Verity knocked herself out trying.

In the weekly Programme Review meetings, some of the other departments were concerned at the frightening aspects of Doctor Who to children. I didn't agree, and thank God the Managing Director Huw Wheldon - who was programme boss and used to chair those meetings - burst out laughing and said, 'Nonsense, nonsense, I've got two kids aged two and four and after the show they put wastepaper baskets on their heads and run around shouting "Exterminate, Exterminate"', and he just cooled it down. Maybe there was jealousy from the children's programme producers, but I never got any complaints from them. There was a general fear that it was a bit too frightening for young children for a Saturday afternoon slot and I tended to pooh, pooh it saying the kids know it's fiction and none of our main characters get hurt.

I had the life and death decision over all my 720 shows, and it was I who, in a sense, killed Z Cars, the first quasi-realist series about British cops ever done in England. Up to then they were used to Dixon Of Dock Green as a very benign, traditional, classical community bobby. Z Cars was a tough new breed of cops and it was started at the BBC about five months before I went there. It was great and it was getting a regular audience of 15-16 million every week. After about three years of this phenomenal success the ratings were going down to about 11-12 million a week. I called in the producer, David Rose, and I told him I thought we should close off Z Cars. He said, 'What?!' I said, 'Look, it's going down, why not take the central characters and move them into a new area of police work?', and he did that with a new series called Softly, Softly and the ratings jumped right back up to 16 million again. That was killing the series when it was still getting a marvellous rating, but it was such a beautiful series and I didn't want to see it degenerate. The actors were getting a bit bored with it and you could see it was slackening, but we took the three central characters and put them in a new police environment and put in a few new characters and the whole thing just went right up to 16 million.

The original hope with Doctor Who was that it would run forever, but one knew that after two or three years it would gradually deteriorate and one would kill it and replace it with something else - and it's gone on for 23 years! There are so many variables in the creation by a group, whether it's television or theatre or a film, that you can never fully guarantee success. In fact any creative activity is a gamble. I was again involved in it in the creation of the Patrick Troughton character. I loved Bill Hartnell, although frankly (and I don't wish to speak ill of the dead, but) I did prefer Patrick Troughton oddly enough. I always thought Bill was simply tired of it, we certainly didn't want him to leave. It was only recently I heard that he had died and then very recently that he had left because he was ill. We didn't want to end Doctor Who - you don't kill anything off that's going good, you'd be crazy. Good shows are very hard to come by and, of course, at the BBC we were doing the best shows in town (we couldn't be beaten in any area in those days!). In long-running shows usually you kill off the charac-



Patrick Troughton, 1965

ter if the actor wants to leave and switch the dramatic emphasis to another character.

I have no recollection of who dreamed up the metamorphosis process, but I have very clear memories of my relations with Patrick Troughton in the evolution of his character. In the screen-tests Patrick was trying to do a Hartnell. It was quite obvious and it just wasn't working. Whatever a character is he's got to be firm and well-formed, and Patrick was trying to be something which he wasn't - trying to imitate another character. He didn't feel he could play it as an irascible old man anyway, but the man was rich enough in his own personality for us to work out something he could do with great conviction and belief.

It was I who worked out with him that he be this Chaplinesque, hobo character from outer space, and that's why his whole attire changed. You may remember he had big, baggy pants and big shoes and that dolorous, sad Buster Keaton look, but he was much less senile than Bill Hartnell. With Bill Hartnell you could see that he was acting intelligent, but with Patrick you knew he was and it's quite a difference. Mind you, Troughton, when he was brilliant, you knew that he really was. But also, it should be said, Bill Hartnell had a valuable, somewhat malevolent quality which attracted the audience. I remember Innes very favourably in the casting of Patrick and the discussions with Patrick when we worked out the hobo thing. Gradually the other members of the cast changed. The little girl had to be changed many times because she kept growing up too fast.

As I said earlier, I was quite involved in the run-up to the first episode and the first two or three series, then I literally had nothing to do with it, except the odd review session that I had with every producer of every show whether I created it or not, and I was involved in approving new producers. That's all. So I had no more hold over it after, say, four months, than I had over, for example, THE WEDNESDAY PLAY. Then I was involved again with Patrick Troughton.

A lot of people have been quoting me foolishly. Although I'm not making fun of Innes Lloyd, I noticed in your interview it was 'I said to Sydney', and 'I said to Sydney'... Well, that's a bit of a joke, it's like 'I said to God', or 'I said to the President'... *How* was I to treat it as a pet show? Definitely *not* true - I had nothing to do with it! Of course I cared — I cared about every show. I guess I was vain enough to think that it was *my* idea and I wished it well with perhaps a bit more vigour, but that's all. But I wished all the shows well, I had to. I was responsible for all of them. If any of them laid an egg I was the one who got my bottom kicked (except no-one ever did!).

Did I tell you about the popular board game, *Trivial Pursuit*? One of the questions asks who created DOCTOR WHO and gives the answer as Terry Nation. I'm considering suing them, and as a result of that I've written to the BBC asking them to give me a credit, 'DOCTOR WHO devised by Sydney Newman' from now on. I wasn't credited at the time because I was Head of Drama and I didn't want the private sector to feel I was taking money out of the mouths of independent creators. I didn't with THE AVENGERS either, perhaps I was stupid? No, I wasn't stupid, I did the right thing at the right time but I regret it now.

I don't feel very able to comment about the series since, not having seen much of it in the last 10-12 years. Tom Baker I have seen a few of. I didn't see enough to tell whether he had any weaknesses. People tell me that they liked him very much. Mind you, I did see some of them being run in Canada and I frankly wasn't impressed. They usually pick a hero as the Doctor who is flawless with humans as foils or dummies. To me that is unimaginative. Drama is basically people interacting with people. All you change is the backgrounds, the environment, and the environment affects the things that those changed people do. It's the chemistry of the balance of your central character, whether good guy or bad guy. I just find that the recent Doctor Whos are charming and dashing, but they have no flaws and that makes them somewhat uninteresting. I don't like the series today at all.

Good science fiction is always basically about a human being in a crazy or mythical environment, and usually the best environment is one that makes a comment on our world today. That's the kind of science fiction I really love and that's why some of these outer space ones are a little weak in reflecting contemporary society or an aspect of it. That to me is an absolute touchstone; audiences *want* to be involved and to relate what they see to their own lives, not all this outer space bullshit that's going on. DOCTOR WHO is simply a fantasy — an escape from reality without any real mythical touchstones to our existence here on the Earth. I don't recognise it today, except for the TARDIS. I'd love to sit down and look at a couple of series.

I've done *so* many things. In the scale of my life it's simply one of a million things. Yes, of course I'm fond of it, but I'm prouder of ARMCHAIR THEATRE and of what Jimmy McTaggart did with THE WEDNESDAY PLAY. They're much more worthwhile to society. But DOCTOR WHO was fun, and as such we need fun in life too and I enjoyed that very much, but I've done a million things. I paint pictures, sculpt, and I love driving a car - I'm prouder of that sculpture (*points*) than I am of DOCTOR WHO! These and DOCTOR WHO are minutes in my life of years.

I'm glad it's brought pleasure to millions of people. I'm glad it's brought prestige to England and prestige to the BBC around the world. I'm very pleased with that, but these are rational pleasures - I can't claim any deep, emotional pleasure because of it. I think I would kill DOCTOR WHO unless I was certain I could revamp it and make it come to life again, but I don't know what went wrong or the circumstances that made them drop it.

If you think a series is worth going on with, you perhaps change the format somewhat. THE WEDNESDAY PLAY was the most popular single play series after ARMCHAIR THEATRE, but what people forget is that it took me two bad years before it became a success. I simply changed the title of the series every year. Every time I had that single play slot on the BBC I gave the producers exactly the same terms I followed in ARMCHAIR THEATRE: to dramatise the turning points in England today in the most dynamic way possible; murder, mysteries, comedies - every genre of drama possible to illuminate the country. The first year the guy botched it up to such an extent that those above wanted to kill the single play. The second year I gave it to someone else and he too messed it up and I had to fight like hell to keep it on the air, and it wasn't until I found the right guy - Jimmy McTaggart - that it was called The Wednesday Play and it took off because he had the right dynamic and the other producers didn't. It was his show. I described what I wanted but he interpreted it in his own way and he did a great job. That's what Verity did with Doctor Who, that's what Leonard White did with The Avengers, and that's what I did with Armchair Theatre and General Motors Theatre. The producer is the spark-plug - if the show's no good get rid of the producer or tell the producer to change the show.

MY YEARS in England, both at ABC and BBC, turned out to be the best of my professional career, because somehow I was the right guy in the right place; television was growing and I had a head start on most Brits. I had six years experience in Canadian television, also my year in New York. In short, I knew what I wanted. I was also old, I had a lot of experience. My experience, my attitude to society - very conscious of working people — and all these factors came together happily. I make no division between my work on commercial television and my years at the BBC as the latter was really a challenge of a quite different order. I was no longer a producer, I was a senior executive with large responsibilities. I had a staff of over 400 when I left and I was spending something like £12-13 million a year, 12.5% in fact of all the production money in television. I was successful and BBC drama seemed the best in the world, so I take great pleasure in *all* that.

By my fourth year at the BBC I really got slightly bored. Everything was going terribly well; I had marvellous people, the shows were all successful, new shows were coming up...and by the fifth year the question arose in my mind of what am I going to do when they offer me a renewal, which I'm sure they are going to do? By then we were doing 730 shows a year and I would say I probably saw 600 of them. I certainly saw every single play and opera. Once the shows started getting taped I could see them in the morning. Also in my office at the BBC I had two television monitors and I could patch in to any of the television studios in London and watch the camera rehearsals like in a real Orwell *1984* situation! And then, happily, the man who was then Group Managing Director of Associated British Pictures Corporation, Robert Clarke, picked me up at Television Centre in his Rolls Royce (to my extreme embarrassment) and took me to lunch. He offered me a job as Chief Producer at the Elstree Studios. Just as earlier I could not refuse the BBC's offer, I could not turn this chance down. When I talked with the BBC chiefs - David Attenborough, Huw Wheldon and so on - they were very unhappy. I explained that I had hardly ever stayed in an organisation longer than five years, and I'm in my late forties so I've got to start a new career *now* if at all, so I went to Elstree.

In retrospect I guess I wish I hadn't because my whole career up at Elstree just fell to pieces, but I did what I had to do at the time. I was just about to do my first movie when the company was taken over by EMI and they fired my entire creative staff, and then paid me off six months later. (Ironic, isn't it, that it was Michael Grade's uncle, Lord Delfont, who wielded the axe!). Earlier David Attenborough had phoned to tell me that he was being promoted and could they put me on the shortlist as Controller of BBC2, and I said no. It's almost pure administration, and as Head of Drama Group I had been far enough away from production and to go even further away would be death for me. Eventually I got a job offer in Canada from the Canadian Radio and Television Commission and they brought me back to Canada to write the Canadian Television Programme Content Regulations.

Back home, after nearly twelve years, I wrote the regulations and the Commission adopted about three quarters of them. Because I was supposed to police the regulations I saw the boss, who was an old friend of mine, and said I wished to leave because 'I'm a poacher, not a gamekeeper'. And then, miraculously, within three weeks I got a call from the Deputy Minister (what you in England would call a Permanent Secretary) asking me if I would like to head the National Film Board of Canada. I said yes, and two weeks later I suddenly came in as the boss of the organisation I had started with as a splicer boy, with a staff of 1100 people and one of the finest documentary and animation film units in the world, and I was there for five years.

After that I moved to Ottawa where I became Special Adviser on Film to the Secretary of State at the level of Deputy Minister. I was there for two years — an absolute waste of my time - and then I more or less retired. I moved back to my home town of Toronto in 1977, and then I got a request to work for an organisation called the Canadian Film Development Corporation, now called Telefilm Canada, which lent money to feature film makers. I became their Chief Creative Consultant and worked two to three days a week, mostly with writers, producers and directors, and had a nice office with a secretary and xerox machines and all the other bureaucratic appurtenances.

Then my wife died, leaving a big hole in my life. I was discontented with what I was doing and I thought I'd take a crack at England again. So here I am, and I've been working on an idea of mine which is a six-hour dramatisation of the whole Bloomsbury Group, Keynes and so on, and the scripts are now finished. I have also come up with a project which I will be doing for Channel 4; a Benjamin Britten opera called *The Little Sweep*, which is part of a larger work called Let's Make An Opera. They were written by Gillian Freeman, and brilliantly. I'm no writer, which is a good reason for my success. In dealing with actors, writers and directors, they know I'm not going to be biased as a potential competitor. They know when I make a criticism that it's objective, not emotional or personal. That's a very important element, I do believe, in my success.

I also have some ideas for changing Doctor Who, which I'm not going to tell you about (I'll tell Michael Grade!). I don't want to say anything that looks like I want a job but I wouldn't mind fooling around with the series a bit. Yes, I've got a very cute idea for replacing the TARDIS... I don't know how it will go. I've only met Michael Grade once and then he just salivated all over me - 'Sydney Newman...*God!!*' I guess he was in knee pants when Doctor Who started! I sent him a copy of my letter to Nathan-Turner, requesting my name be put on the show, and on Michael's copy I wrote, '...and why don't we have the lunch we've been threatening each other for a long time?'..." ❑

● **Interviewed by Tim Collins and Gary Leigh**

● **Postscript:** *Sydney Newman is now retired and lives in Canada.*

1963 **the companions** 1965

William Russell

"That wasn't a pilot - it was an attempt to get it right the first time!" - **October 1985**

"I STARTED to act when I was at school and found it was something I could do, as opposed to the lessons, and it went on from there really. After leaving school I went into the Air Force where I did some acting in organised entertainments, and then to University. I didn't do anything professional until I left University and went into Rep at Tonbridge in Kent for about six months, and then I got a chance to go to the Oxford Playhouse. I was there for two years. I left to go into *Hamlet* with Alec Guinness and that brought me to the West End.

It was a very exciting experience, and also a very dramatic one. They had installed in the New Theatre (now the Albery Theatre) a new lighting console so they could control everything from the back of the theatre instead of having people pulling on ropes in the wings. Everything went wrong on the first night! We did it all on a very simple black stage, so a lot depended on the lighting effects. When lights started appearing in all the wrong places it turned into a great theatrical disaster. It was an absolute fiasco, like a bad dream. As a result we received very bad notices and came off in six rehearsal weeks!

William Russell with Marjorie Steele in Somerset Maugham's *Our Betters* (BBC1, 7th February 1960)

I then started doing films. I did about twelve altogether before I did any television. I particularly enjoyed doing a film called *They Who Dare* in Cyprus, which was directed by Lewis Milestone, the famous American director of *All Quiet on the Western Front*. I think I was rather typecast in those days. I was a dashing young lieutenant in that, as I was in an Alan Neame film called *The Man Who Never Was*. I played Gloria Grahame's boyfriend.

The first television I did was a magazine programme. I was introduced by Flora Robson as a bright, young 'Actor of Today'. I was going to do a scene with Susan Holman, who just happened to be Vivien Leigh's daughter! The only thing was that she didn't want to act at all! That programme was done at Lime Grove, all live of course. I then did a children's series which I enjoyed very much, based on Robert Louis Stevenson's book *St. Ives*. It was a story about a French aristocrat captured during the Napoleonic wars who escaped from Edinburgh Castle. It was all about his romantic adventures in England and Scotland, and even included travelling in hot air balloons! In the end he won the hand of Flora, the good Scottish girl. I must have done that in the Fifties, and in those days we would record little bits on film, like the balloon sequence, then go into the studio and do the rest of the programme live. Live TV had a wonderful first-night feel about it and was very exciting.

I then did a series of plays based on the works of Mazo De La Roche. She was a Canadian who wrote very popular adventure stories, and I was a mad-cap young Canadian - 'Young Renny'. We had a marvellous time. We used to do it live on Sunday and again the following Thursday. I remember one - for those days - daring scene where I woke up in the hay with a girl and she said, 'Was it alright?' When it came to repeating the play on the Thursday, the show's producer, Douglas Allen, said, 'We've had word from the Palace — the didn't like it'. So we cut the scen We were censored! I was still doin theatre then. I appeared in a marve lous play called *Montserrat* wi Richard Burton at the Lyric Theatr and another one called *The River Li* in which Paul Schofield and Virgin McKenna starred. I only understudi in that, and didn't enjoy the exper ence.

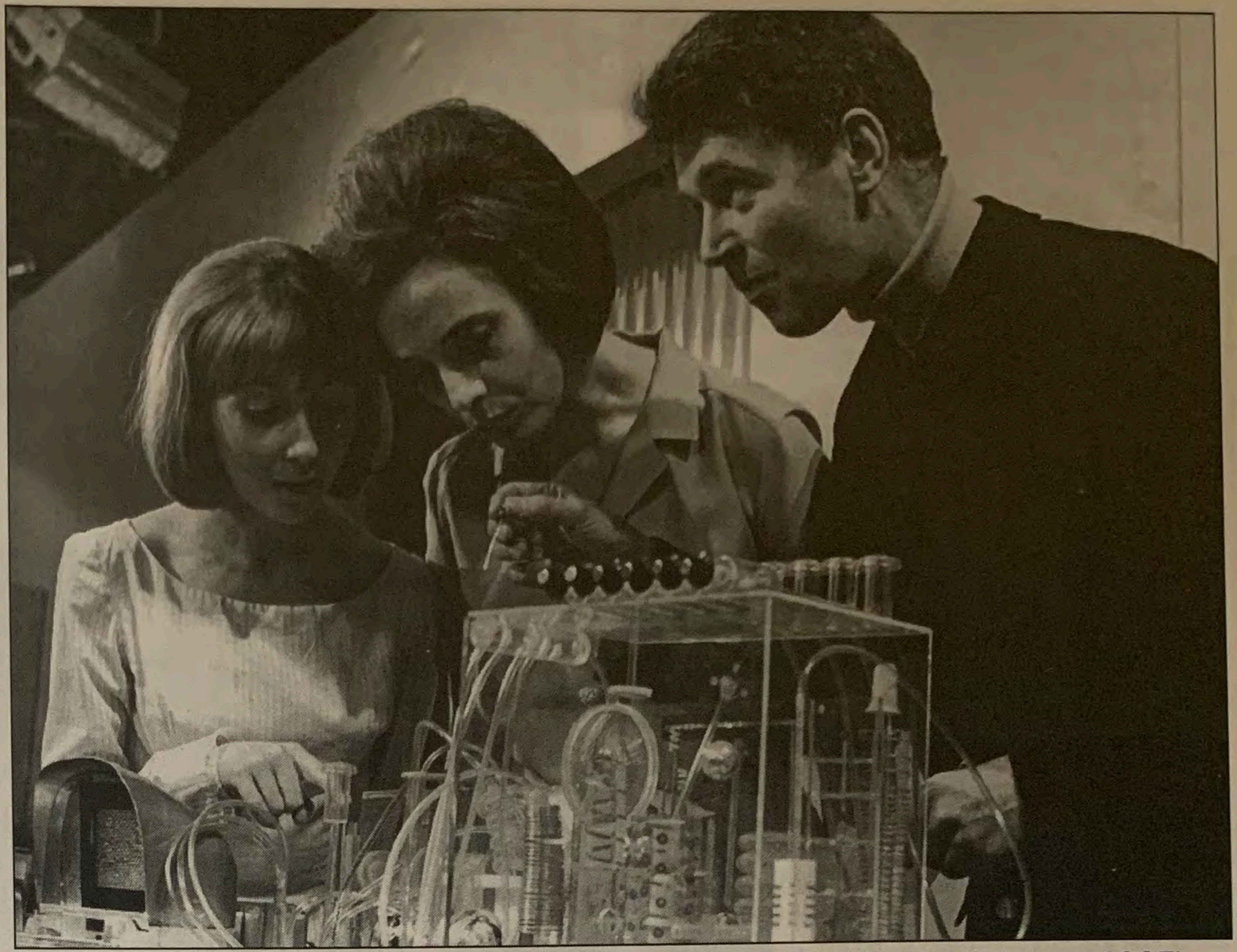
The real breakthrough for me television came when I was chosen for The Adventures of S Lancelot. Soon my company had The Adventures of Rob Hood with Richard Greene in one studio, Sir Lancelot with in another and The Buccaneer with Robert Shaw in yet anothe Then came a marvellous offer from the BBC to star in a gre twenty week series of Nicholas Nickleby. Later I played Dav Copperfield, but that was all filmed.

Doctor Who was suggested to me by Verity Lambert, who go in touch with me and said that she'd like me to play this characte called Ian. We talked a lot about the sort of person he was going to be, the character they wanted, and how Jackie Hill and I would fit into the stories. Of course the characters did develop as the series progressed. I was very impressed with Billy because he had been such a famous character-actor in British films. He was marvellous in *Brighton Rock* and wonderful in *The Way Ahead*. Billy played a sergeant in the Carol Reed film and was really terrific. Jackie and Carole I didn't know at that time.

We became very much a little family group with Verity and the directors we had. We started off recording at Lime Grove, then moved to Riverside and Television Centre. We would meet and discuss the script on Saturday, rehearse on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and go into the studio on Friday. It was all done within a week. Sundays we had off.

At Riverside we all decided that the canteen food was so awful we would bring in something of our own. I'd bring a salad, Billy would bring a pie, Carole the desert and Jackie some delicious cheeses. Verity (who is an excellent cook) would sometimes bring something too. So we would all have a little feast during lunch-break! We got on really well — I think that's the secret of our success. It's exactly the same with the theatre, any group of actors — if the group is happy then the product is usually good. It's probably the same in any walk of life.

I remember we did the first episode twice because Sydney Newman didn't like what he saw. 'Do it again!' he said to all of us! We did and I'm sure we improved upon our first effort. But our first pilot was certainly not a pilot - it was an attempt to get it right the first time! We went back to the Stone Age and the actors had to do a lot of Tarzan-like acting. We could hardly rehearse it, we all laughed so much! Then, very quickly, we did the first Dalek one and it was then that the series really took off. The first time I realised it was going to be successful was when I picked up a copy of *The Evening Standard* and saw a cartoon of General De Gaulle as a Dalek! I showed it to Billy, who said 'We're in!'



Maurien O'Brien, Jacqueline Hill and William Russell (*The Space Museum*, 1965)

I can remember we had great difficulties trying to move the Daleks. I had to push the lid off one of them and a horrible thing came out. My little daughter screamed when she saw the thing come out! In fact, what was in it was a young man, sitting on a seat and pushing it around on castors! It was amazing, we could never believe that they would become a world-wide success. What was clever about the design was that it was extremely simple, and it had never been done before. I realise now that all we had to do was get to the top of some stairs and then they wouldn't be able to come after us! We had a very adventurous director called Richard Martin, who had a Dalek in the Thames. It got stuck and couldn't move! End of filming that day!

I remember Maureen O'Brien coming in, a very good actress. We didn't like anyone leaving, but it's something you get used to in the theatre so it's not such a turmoil. I think Carole, out of all the assistants I've seen, was the only one to have a strange, unearthly quality about her. I still feel she was the best.

We used to argue furiously about the scripts! One of the things we used to argue about a lot was that we felt that the writers were making us say things that we wouldn't say. We eventually got a script-editor, Dennis Spooner, who was marvellous. Dennis came into it and co-ordinated the writers and said, 'You can't have Russell saying that — he doesn't say that sort of thing'.

Once you got into the story it was fine. What mattered was whether the story was good, whether they kept to our characters, whether we would react in that way. These were the things that we were concerned about mainly. Billy was concerned whether Doctor Who would do this or that and so on. He was a very professional actor who worked very hard on his characterisation and never ignored a comic moment. It was his idea to keep getting my name wrong. I remember once he called me Ian Cuthbertson, who's now a well-known actor!

There was a very amusing adventure where I remember climbing into a box of matches (*Planet of Giants, 1964*) and later I was sent down a plug hole! The matchbox was terrific, but the matches were quite tricky as they were like enormous telegraph poles and could be quite dangerous when they rolled about! I survived!

I wanted to leave Doctor Who because I was getting into a nine-to-five mentality. I needed a change. Billy was furious: '*What*?!', he said. He was absolutely livid! I understand he was never as happy with the series after Jackie, Verity and I had left. I was very excited because I was going on to do two plays with Jackie Hill. It was nice to be back in the theatre again. I've never had trouble finding work since, but I like the fact that I've done Doctor Who and Sir Lancelot — the variety is all part of an actor's life and I love that aspect of it.

It's an extraordinary thing about the theatre — some people you remain friendly with and see from time to time, but others who you have had very close professional relationships with you never see again. Billy and I kept in touch through letters and the odd Christmas card, but we never saw each other again. I have seen Carole from time to time, but Verity has become more of a friend of mine. Now, of course, she's a very successful lady, very high-powered. Much deserved I think. Jackie I was very fond of, but we met rarely. And I was very sad, last year, when she died after a long illness.

My last theatre company, ATC, played a trick on me; they invited me to a little tea-party and when I got there they switched on the television to reveal a video of the very first Doctor Who story! I've been out of the country rather a lot since 1980 with the ATC, touring all over the British Isles, South America and Europe, and directed three of their workshop productions.

The last Doctor Who I saw (*The Five Doctors, 1983*) I thought was rather marvellous. It would be nice to come back for something. One story, perhaps..." ❑

● **Interviewed by John Brand and Graeme Wood.**

● **Postscript:** *When I left ATC I joined the National Theatre with another group of actors under the direction of Mike Alfreds. We did another production of The Wandering Jew and three Italian plays. Then I went to the RSC for two years with Hamlet, Midsummer Night's Dream and a very striking production of A Clockwork Orange which transferred to the West End. More recently I have been doing Hamlet again in the USA. At the moment I am rehearsing Sleuth for a special production which is to open in The Little Theatre, Middlesborough, for a professional season.* - ***William Russell, January 1994***

1963 **the companions** 1964

Carole Ann Ford

"I felt trapped doing Doctor Who" - October 1993

"I STARTED my theatre career literally when I was about three with dancing lessons. The reason I was interested so young was because my grandfather used to run a social club which had a marvellous theatre. All sorts of people used to go on and give wonderful performances and I was crazy about it. I used to go and watch anybody and anything, and in the interval I used to tap up and down the trestle tables and they used to throw pennies at me! I did my first professional acting job when I was eight in a film called *The Last Load.*

Was it something your parents encouraged you to do?

I don't think they had any option, really. I was just very, very determined and said from the moment that I could think/speak/see that it was what I wanted to do. Anything to do with acting I just leapt at, including all my school plays, and if there wasn't something going on then I would start it and drive everybody mad organising them. Even French lessons couldn't be just French lessons; it had to be French choirs and French plays.

At the age of fifteen I joined an amateur theatrical company, The Renegades, with a then-great friend of mine, David Kernan. I decided I didn't want anymore school because I thought enough is enough, I want to be an actress and that's that. My headmaster at the time insisted I had tremendous mathematics potential and that I should have an academic career, but I hated anything to do with figures. He had me sitting in his study doing private lessons. I did well at my mock GCSEs so I thought it proved I could do it and I didn't really need to do the real thing, very stupidly I might add. I wish I'd done the exams now. At the time there was a sort of contractual agreement between both parents and the education authorities where you are expected to stay there until you were at least sixteen and then you could leave. As I wanted to leave before then I had to actually buy myself out, which I did with my first job, a cinema commercial for Cadbury's Milk Tray.

Best Wishes
Carole Ann Ford

A late Sixties publicity photo

Many theatre and television roles followed, among them one of the big ABC series at the time, PROBATION OFFICER.

Sebastian Shaw played my dad. A brilliant actor. It was a sort of baptism of fire because I was only fifteen when I did that, and - as happened to me with most things I seemed to be doing - I didn't understand certain aspects of the script because I was so innocent. It was very, very in advance of its time because the story was that my father in this was a very respected doctor and a latent homosexual, and he was picked up in Piccadilly Circus Underground loo trying to pick up boys. In the play this was splashed all over the newspapers - shock, horror - and me being the poor fifteen year old kid at school got the blunt end of it. He tried to commit suicide and I really went round the bend until a social worker turned up to straighten me out. It was quite a difficult first TV role! My mother still has a portrait of me painted for the play.

In 1960 you had a role in the soap EMERGENCY WARD 10. Do you remember anything about that?

I think I was playing a secretary in that and there was a very, very dishy Australian actor, Charles Tingwell, who even today pops up every so often in these Australian films and soaps. I think to myself, 'Good God, look at him now', but at the time I had a mad passion for this man and to find myself in a television play with him was absolutely wonderful.

In 1961 you were in an episode of NO HIDING PLACE called Top Secret.

I'd completely forgotten that! Oh God, yes, I played a Russian ballerina inadvertently passing top secret information. I would come on for my curtain call, be thrown a bouquet which I would pick up,

John Cura Telesnaps from Man on a Bicycle

do the curtsey and go off the stage, and the top secret information would be hidden in the flowers. My dresser took the flowers from me and extracted the information!

The same year you did the film Mix Me a Person with Adam Faith, Donald Sinden and Ann Baxter.

Ah yes, my favourite of all the films I did. It was funny when I was cast for that because there was another actress in it and I was originally put up for her part - as a slut that no-one liked. When we went to see the producers for our casting session they decided that I was going to play the sweet, innocent girl who was Adam Faith's girlfriend and she was going to play the slut. At the time I had very long hair and my agent tended to push me for very sexy roles, but they decided to go against the more obvious casting and it worked rather well. I was a bit apprehensive about playing opposite Adam Faith because, as far as I was concerned, he was just a pop singer and I had no idea of how he was going to be as an actor. In fact he was brilliant and I'd love to work with him again.

I haven't done all that many films, and most of them have been absolute stinkers. Sometimes they appear on television and most of them I prefer not to watch, but when this one comes up I like to watch it because there are some really nice scenes. I have always had the most exotic locations in everything I've done and this was one of them - a gas works! In the film we had this wonderful Bentley in which we were driving around, and we had to stop the car for this scene where Adam was kissing me. Suddenly hundreds of his fans appeared (he was very popular then). Word had got out that we were doing this film and I was literally almost torn limb from limb. The idea that their Adam was going to kiss me infuriated them. Well, we had to be rescued! They dragged us to the nearest house, bashed on the door, this poor woman answered and they just bundled us inside. She was just standing there thinking, 'What the hell is going on?' It could have been quite a serious situation actually. Barry Norman's father, Leslie Norman, directed that.

Then came The Day Of The Triffids...

Oh that! It was a terrible film to make. I'd read the book and loved it (I'm a great fan of John Wyndham), and when I was asked to play Bettina I was delighted. I thought 'Oh great, at last I'm going to be in a good film directed by a good director using good actors' (Howard Keel was in it). Anyway, first blow was the script, it was appalling. It bore very little resemblance to the book. Second blow was the director. We finished up having five directors, each one walking out after the other. There were union problems, directorial problems, money problems, script problems... One minor problem was that Howard Keel was about 6' 5" tall and I'm just over 5 feet - there was no way they could match us up! I remember watching him do a scene with this French actress, Nicole Maurey (she was, I think, about 5' 8") with her on a box! What the hell were they going to do with me, dig a hole for him to stand in?! We worked it out somehow; they angled us so that it looked okay but I did have to stand on a box when we had to be really close. It really wasn't a good film.

Apparently the director Waris Hussein saw you in a play on TV, Man on a Bicycle and promptly cast you in Doctor Who.

(You never think 'I must remember this for when I'm asked about it in thirty years time'!). He went through my agent and I remember I was told it was going to be the most extraordinary thing, but in a different way to the way it turned out. The character I was going to play was going to be very physical and immensely strong - along the lines of the Avengers girls. She was also going to have an extraordinary wardrobe designed by one of the top designers of the time, and in fact I remember looking through some fashion magazines with Verity, Waris and a couple of other people trying to decide who might be a good person to design the costumes. I always hoped and asked if it would be possible to have bits and pieces from the periods I would be visiting (it would have been marvellous for her to be wearing peculiar combination of clothes; perhaps an odd hat, some extraordinary boots or some wonderful antique buckle - something she'd picked up from everywhere she went).

If I couldn't wear a combination of the bits and pieces then I wanted to wear the most way out things possible. Susan said that she loved all the gear of the Sixties so I wanted to wear the extreme Sixties clothes - boots, tights, leggings (strangely enough like they are wearing now). On one occasion I brought in a marvellous Mary Quant outfit - very, very tight orange and black striped leggings, an orange and black striped top and thigh boots as well. I loved Mary Quant and I wanted to wear her things all the time, and I particularly wanted to wear this outfit. They said 'Absolutely not!' I think I finished up with just the top and was relegated to little jumpers, little shirts and jeans, and, on one occasion, a terrible pinafore dress with ankle socks. I was allowed to wear my leather hat which I bought, though, but I was never allowed to do what was originally planned for Susan because they decided to tone her down so that the teenagers of the time could identify with her. I was quite upset at the time (she was also supposed to have telepathic communication with her grandfather).

Did you attempt to rebel against this?

I don't think rebel is the right word to use. We, all four of us, were constantly making suggestions about our characters. Unfortunately, what I think happened - and I was discussing it with William Russell only the other day who agreed with me to a certain extent - was that on the whole the regular characters had far less interesting roles than the visiting characters. I used to envy actors coming into it because they had new and interesting things to do. Every new story I'd get a new script and I would think 'Is this going to give me something new to do, please?', and it didn't; I was getting the same things to do with each new story and practically never given something wonderful to act.

Do you feel, had Susan been given a stronger role, you might have stayed in the series a bit longer?

Opening a fete for charity in 1964

WIlliam Hartnell, Carole Ann Ford and Verity Lambert are introduced to the press to promote "a late afternoon serial aimed at the 11-14 age group, designed to bridge the viewing gap between afternoon and evening square screen audiiences"

Oh sure, but you see Susan was fifteen when I started. We did it for a year or so chronologically and we were supposed to have been floating around out there for at least a year, and I was never allowed to grow up. I should have changed as a sixteen year old would change. I just felt I was getting duller and duller and more and more predictable. The opportunities for actually acting were getting few and far between. This is why I loved the two-parter that we did, *Edge of Destruction* (*1964*), because it gave me something to do.

What is your foremost abiding memory of working with William Hartnell?

Well, my mental image of him is of an attitude that he had; just standing there with one thumb sort of hooked to his lapel and looking rather disapprovingly at everyone. This one does see him do quite a lot on screen, and he did that often in rehearsals too. He was never backwards at coming forward if he saw something that needed doing, and if he knew what should be done then he came out with it and that was great. We respected him for it. I was very fond of him and we got on very well, there were very few disputes. Discussions yes, but very few arguments or the sort of rows that I have heard other people did have with him.

But he was always interfering and telling me off because he thought he knew better than me, being an actor of many years standing with lots of experience. I was always off on a spending spree and I'd come in wearing these extraordinary things, and I also loved champagne. He would see me spending my money (he thought) like water so he used to caution me and tell me I should be saving my money and looking to the future because I never knew what was around the corner. I took it and took it until, one day, I just exploded and yelled '*Enough*! This is my money, I'm working for it, leave me alone and let me get on with it!'

Wasn't there a large bottle of champagne waiting for you the next day?

Well yes, he did disapprove of this champagne business. We'd go to the BBC bar after recording and have a drink. I'd have one, just one - it probably wasn't even champagne, perhaps Bucks Fizz - and he thought it was the height of decadence. He did come down rather heavy on the champagne and I told him to mind his own business and, yes, the next day he came in with a huge bottle to say sorry. He was very sweet really.

How did the Daleks strike you on first impression - did you think they would catch on?

Not really. I thought they'd go for more gory monsters. I think it was what they did and what they said that was powerful. I think, without this strange metallic voice going '*Exterminate, Exterminate*' and the great storylines behind them, they wouldn't have had the impact that they did. It still amazes me that anyone should find them frightening because they were so slow, you could always dodge your way through them and they couldn't go up or down stairs. Actually it took a great deal of acting expertise to make them look frightening. When they prodded your tummy you really wanted to laugh!

Did you prefer the historical stories to the futuristic ones?

Yes, much more so. I suppose because they gave better acting opportunities and were much more interesting. We always seemed to have better acting parts in the historical ones, and I loved dressing up in the period clothes!

The Reign of Terror was a good one. We had a new, Hungarian director (Henric Hirsch). The only bit of directorial advice he gave me throughout the whole thing that I can recall was, 'Don't be maudlin, don't be maudlin...' I didn't know what he meant (I think it was the bit where I was screaming about the rats or something, trying to dig my way out with my hands). I said, 'You've got to be kidding! Here I am, shut away in a prison where I am about to be beheaded, the place is alive with rats, my fingers are bleeding because I'm digging my way out, I have a fever too and I haven't got to feel sorry for myself?!'

Your final scene, in The Dalek Invasion of Earth, remains to this day one of the most poignant in the series' history.

They weren't glycerine tears. I felt genuinely sad at not working with my lovely family - as they'd become - anymore. I was quite glad to be out of the series though. I'd been offered some fantastic work whilst I was in it which I couldn't do. It was the usual actors tale; as soon as you are in a job everybody wants you. I felt trapped doing DOCTOR WHO; I did love doing it at the time but could see it getting me absolutely nowhere.

Quite honestly I didn't like the hype. It is every actor's dream to become famous, well known etc., but I actually didn't enjoy it. I thought I enjoyed it at the beginning, but then it really got on my nerves. Obviously there are advantages - you write a cheque and you don't have to use your identity card, and in restaurants you get the best tables - but there are bad things about it too. On the whole I preferred the days when I was just a working actor and could just submerge myself in a variety of different roles. My career was building in every direction - theatre, film, television - and I was getting really good roles and enjoying everything I was doing, and DOCTOR WHO just put an absolute dead stop to it. I couldn't be touched with a barge pole by TV people for a long time because I was just so well known as Susan.

Reunited with Verity Lambert in October 1993 to mark 30 years of DOCTOR WHO in a BBC documentary

Your very next role after DOCTOR WHO was a PUBLIC EYE episode, The Morning Wasn't So Hot, in which you played a prostitute. Was that a conscious effort to break the mould?

Yes. I turned down a hell of a lot of stuff where I was being asked to reproduce Susan in TV and in films. I got away from it in theatre where they would let me do a variety of parts - I was working non stop doing some wonderful stuff and having the time of my life - but as far as TV and films were concerned, they were not so adventurous.

Rumour has it that many years later you sent a photograph to the director, Christopher Barry - in which you were lying scantily clad on a bear rug - with an accompanying note saying, 'I don't only play little girls, you know!'

It's quite possible, I did lots of things in desperation. Roger Vadim was interested in me for a big film (the sort of thing you pray for); a fictional meeting between the French poet Baudelaire and Edgar Allen Poe. According to the script Poe went off to a desert island somewhere and he thought it would be great to bring back this half-caste girl (me), who was totally unsophisticated, and present her to society dressed in extraordinary clothes and jewels. They fell in love and there were some wonderful nude scenes lined up (they were going to be very tastefully done through misty outlines and things, so one's nudity would hardly be apparent). Roger Vadim wanted some photos of me showing as much as possible, so I got some done by Ben Jones, a superb photographer. I told him I didn't want any actual nudes but as near as damn it. So these wonderful, wonderful photos were taken, tremendously tasteful of course. I was quite pleased with them and thought I must use them. I was getting very fed up with the TV roles I was being offered and I thought, 'My God, if they can see I look like *this*, surely I'll stop getting offered schoolgirl parts', so I sent quite a few out, although I can't remember who I sent them to. Of course the finance was pulled from the film and it was never made.

Do you remember the small role you had in The Great St. Trinians Train Robbery?

Ah yes. They wanted me to play a schoolgirl in that too, in fact they wanted me to play the part James Mason's daughter, Portland Mason, played (the head of the sixth form). I said no, no, no. I was in my mid-twenties by then and I used to take my child with me everywhere and say 'Look, I'm a married woman with a *child*!' I just refused to do anymore schoolgirls, but they said, 'We really want you in the film'. I said, 'There has got to be something else for me', but I was told there was nothing. I went in the waiting room and read the script to see if there was anything, and I found this marvellous French schoolteacher, which wasn't a big part but was such fun. I thought I could do something with that, so I rushed back in and said 'What about her?' They said no way, so I said 'Look, let me go home and I will dress up as my idea of how she should be, and if I don't convince you, fine, but if I do then give me the part'. I went home and put on my tightest skirt and highest heels, tightest sweater, swept my hair up high and put on masses of make-up. Then, for something a bit different, I went in there smoking a cigar! I had such fun with it.

At Longleat in 1983, with Elizabeth Sladen and Sarah Sutton

I also greatly enjoyed the marvellous DIAL M FOR MURDER for TV with Vladek Sheybal although, unfortunately, the film overran in time. It just so happened that our particular scene was a separate entity and didn't link with the others as far as continuity was concerned so they were able to dispose with it. Vladek was furious!

Did you have a break in the Seventies to raise your family?

I did and I didn't. Unfortunately I had a divorce which knocked me for six. I also became very ill. I was on location doing a commercial and went to open a window in my hotel room but it stuck and it ripped my back. I was prescribed some muscle relaxing pills, which are very good for the majority of people, but there are a small minority that have very bad side effects. It nearly killed me. It has virtually ruined my life and certainly ruined my career because it made me allergic to practically everything under the sun. Now I have asthma and countless allergies, which I can now control because I know what I am allergic to and can avoid it. But it caused a problem or two then, not so much in theatre but especially in TV or film, because one of the effects is that my face could swell up and it took a while to go. If you are half way through something and you suddenly look a bit puffy the camera doesn't take kindly to it.

Workwise I slowed down a hell of a lot, then I remarried and had another child. With my first child, my daughter, I was working the whole time and I realised I missed out on her early childhood and didn't want that to happen again. I was doing theatre work when I was asked to be in *The Five Doctors* (*1983*).

And they still wrote for Susan as though she were a child!

I know, I nearly didn't do it you know. I turned it down when I was first offered the script, I was horrified. They were writing Susan as if she were just one of the other companions, not his grand-daughter at all. She was referring to him as 'The Doctor'. I said 'Hey, come on, this is Susan, it's her grandfather she's talking about!' I really had to fight for that. Dare I tell you what they said? They said they didn't want to bring people's attention to the fact that she was his grand-daughter, they wanted to keep away from that aspect of it. I asked what was going on, and they said 'BBC policy. Some of us are a bit worried because if he has a grand-daughter then there had to have been a Mrs. Who, in other words, he had to have indulged in...*sex*!' I laughed, tears were running down my face! I couldn't believe that they were being serious but they were, but they rewrote it in the end.

There were moments (for example when I met Peter Davison's Doctor) where we wanted to be looking at each other absolutely gobsmacked, because although I was his grand-daughter I was obviously older than him, and we were told not to do it. No way.

Jacqueline Hill, Carole Ann Ford (*The Reign of Terror*, 1964)

A similar situation arose in Dimensions in Time (1993) wheree you are paired up with Colin Baker.

The story doesn't really make sense, but with a charity thing like that does it matter? It's something that is amusing and something that is, I suppose, quite historic. I don't think anyone is going to bother too much about whether people are in their right time or coming or going or whatever.

Were your lines an improvement this time?

No, I changed them. At least I didn't have to twist my ankle!

We were all shocked by the sad death of Jacqueline Hill recently.

She was a lot of fun, always giggling but very professional. Really, I suppose one of the things I remember her most for is her compassion towards other actors, specifically when we first started. She had been a visiting actor in another series, it was very cliquey and was made to feel very out of place, so she said, 'Let's make sure that to visiting actors we immediately embrace them into our little family'. I think that's incredibly important because I've also been a visitor in other series and I know exactly what she means. There is the 'them and us' situation, which is the resident regulars who all know each other terribly well, and the visitors, which is almost a snobbish attitude. I would like to know whether the visiting artists who worked with us thought we were friendly. I hope so. Little things, like always including visitors when you are going for something to eat instead of the usual group of three or four, can sometimes be all it needs!

Were there any favourite guest actors you remember?

I liked George Coulouris who was in *The Keys of Marinus*. He had tremendous stature. John Ringham in *The Aztecs* was very good. I thought he had a touch of Olivier about him actually. I must tell you this. I really admired the model of the set for the story about the French Revolution, *The Reign of Terror*. I absolutely adored it. At the beginning they always bring in a scale model to show you what it looks like so they can tell you where you have to move, how you can get from one bit to another, where the cameras are going to be and so on. Some of them are very sketchy but this particular one was a work of art, it was so beautiful. It was a grown up dolls house sort of thing and it was given to me. It sat on the top of my wardrobe for a long, long time and then we had a rather over active cleaning lady who came in with her feather duster and she didn't see it. The whole thing, which was very delicate, went *crash*!

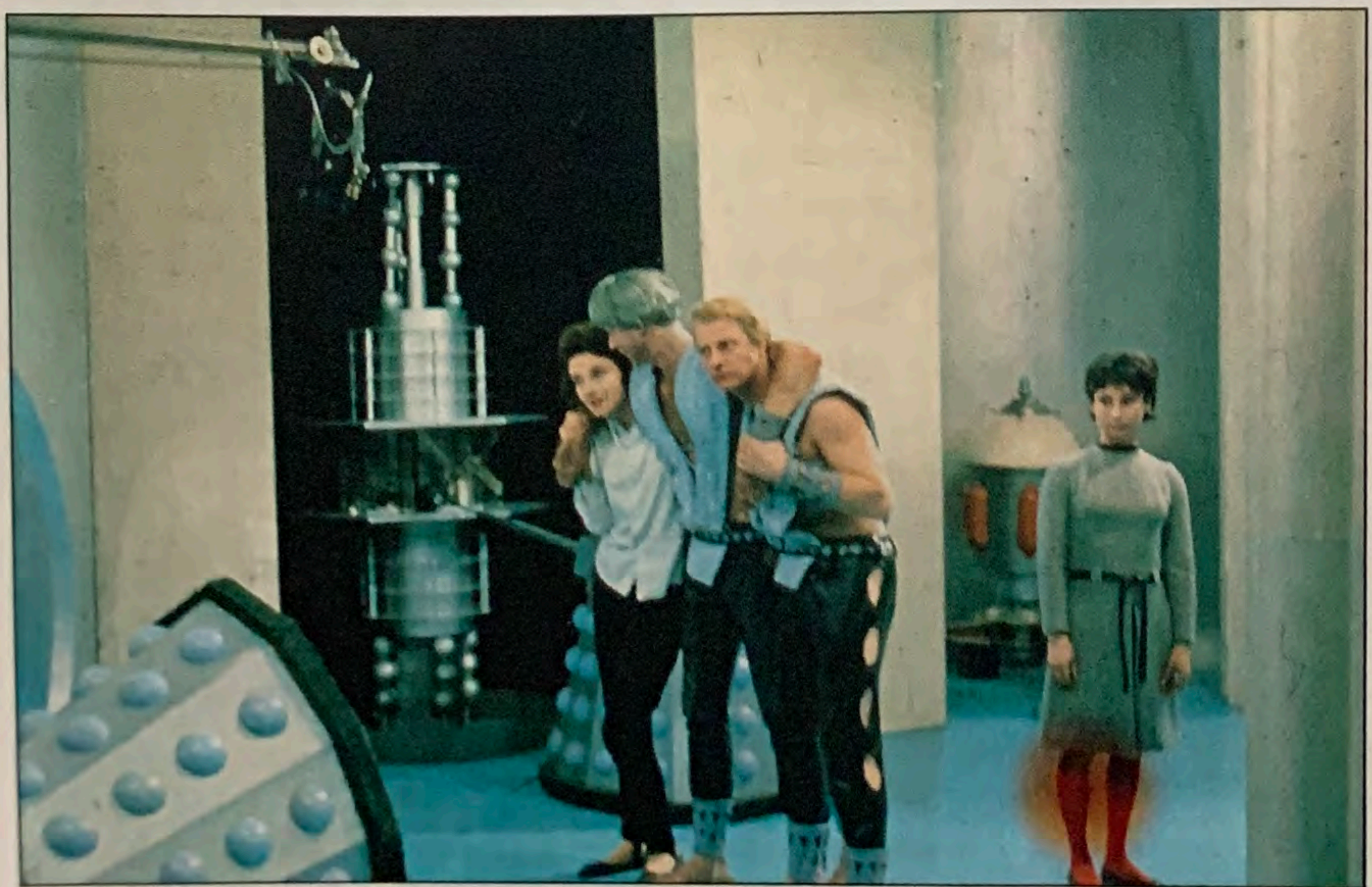
What are you doing at the moment?

I'm teaching. I teach every aspect of voice work. I teach politicians, I teach businessmen and, of course, I teach actors. Sometimes I teach in drama schools but usually I prefer to teach on a one to one basis. It's very exciting.

Any acting in the pipeline?

No, I haven't been trying to get anything. My daughter has just gone to university and I've enjoyed helping her and working with her. Living where we are it is very difficult to get public transport so I have to transport her here, there and everywhere. I wanted to be on call for her; she's had a few problems, and I wanted to be there. Now she's settled in to University I wouldn't at all mind having another go. Sometimes I'll see something and think I'd love to do that, but other times... I get almost as much of a buzz out of my teaching as I ever did out of acting, actually, and I don't need to do it for the ego trip, I never did. ❑

● **Interviewed by Gary Leigh**



Barbara and Susan inside the Dalek city (episode seven of *The Daleks*, 1964)

The original TARDIS crew take in their luxurious surroundings (*The Keys of Marinus*, 1964)

1963 **the directors** 1979

Christopher Barry

"Tom had done it for so long he thought knew it better than we did" - **December 1985**

● *Strong language*

The Mutants (1972)

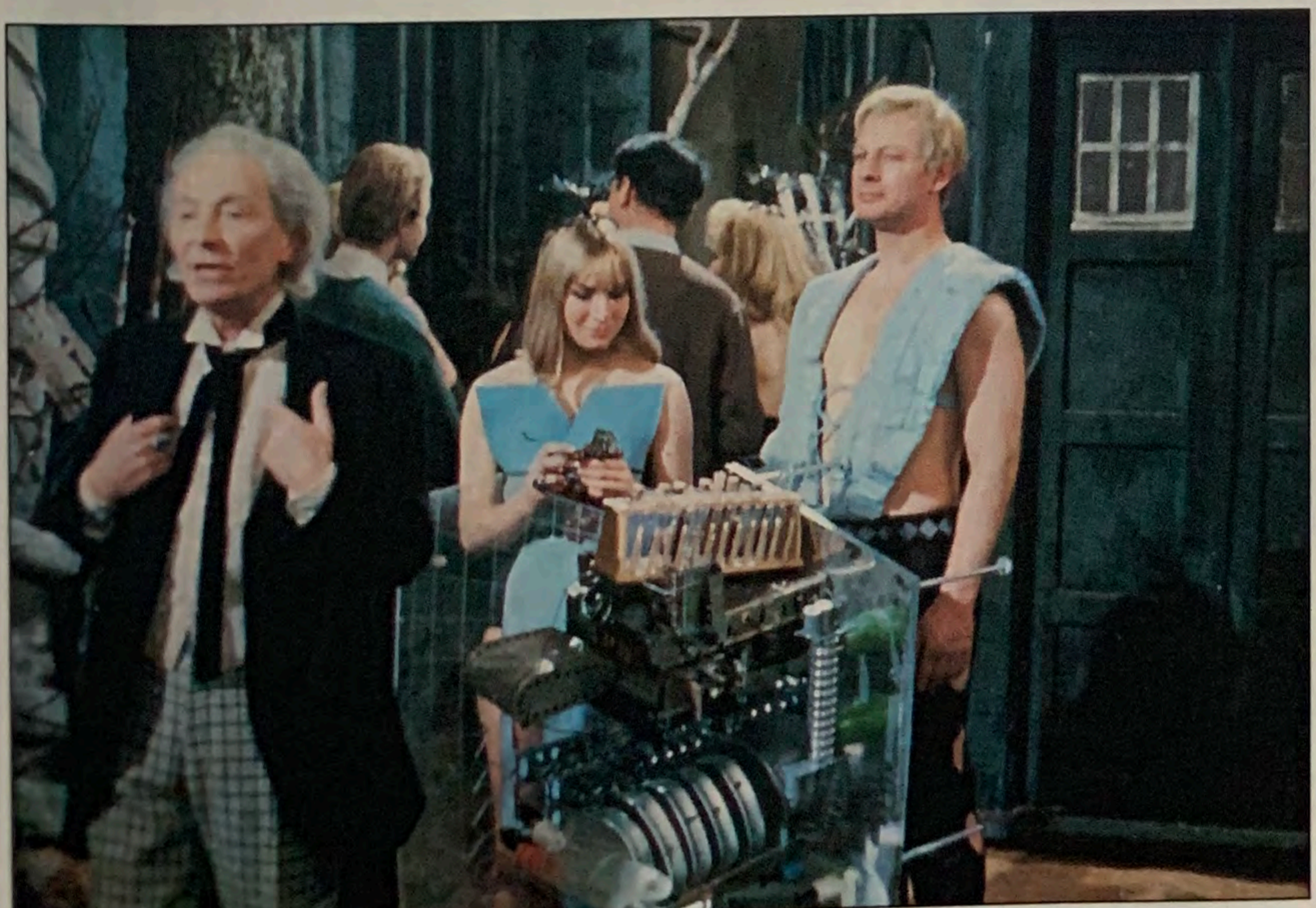
"I WAS in movies originally. In the mid-Fifties film was shrinking and television was expanding, and the director I'd been first assistant for at Ealing Studios, Basil Dearden, suggested I apply to the BBC for a job as a production assistant in drama. He must have had pre-knowledge that Ealing Studios was going to diminish and there'd be less work. In fact, almost the following day after I got the job at the BBC, around 1955, it was announced that the BBC had acquired Ealing Studios.

At the BBC I worked with a producer (who was in fact a director but they were called producers then) from the theatre and didn't relish film at all, and since I'd worked in film I started taking more and more responsibility for his film sequences and started directing television programmes. The first thing that had my name on the screen, other than 'film sequences directed by...', was Starr & Co., which was the BBC's first ever twice-weekly soap-opera.

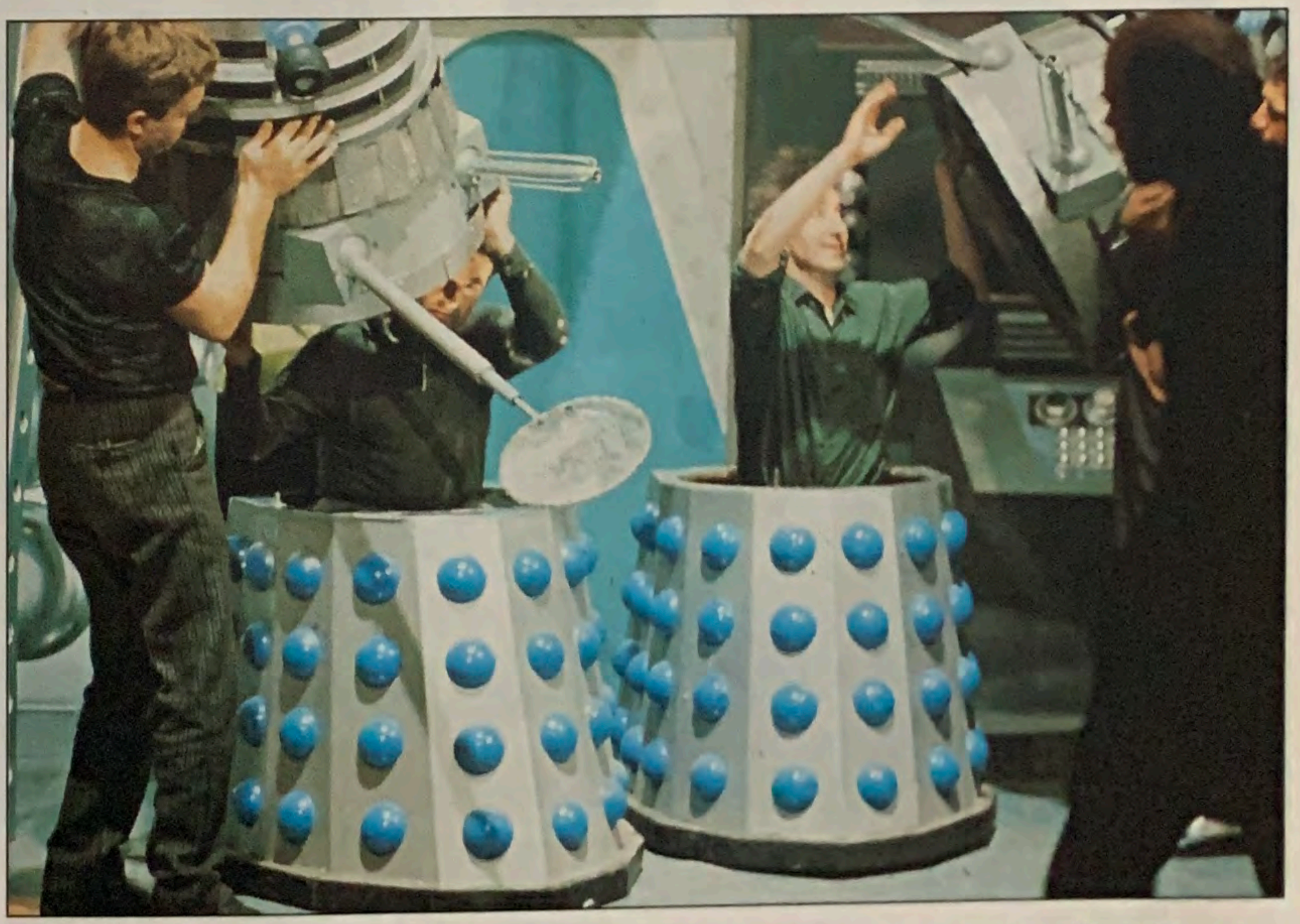
After some years of various things I was flattered at being asked by Verity Lambert to be one of the initial directors of Doctor Who. I was fascinated by the idea and delighted when I saw the scripts and the potential of it.

The Daleks (1963/4)...

Richard Martin and I were both fairly new to television. As far as I remember I did the first two episodes, then we started doing alternate ones and he finished it off. I think it was partly to spread the load, and partly to sort of help bring him in. I don't think there was any disparity in style. We worked very closely together, partic-

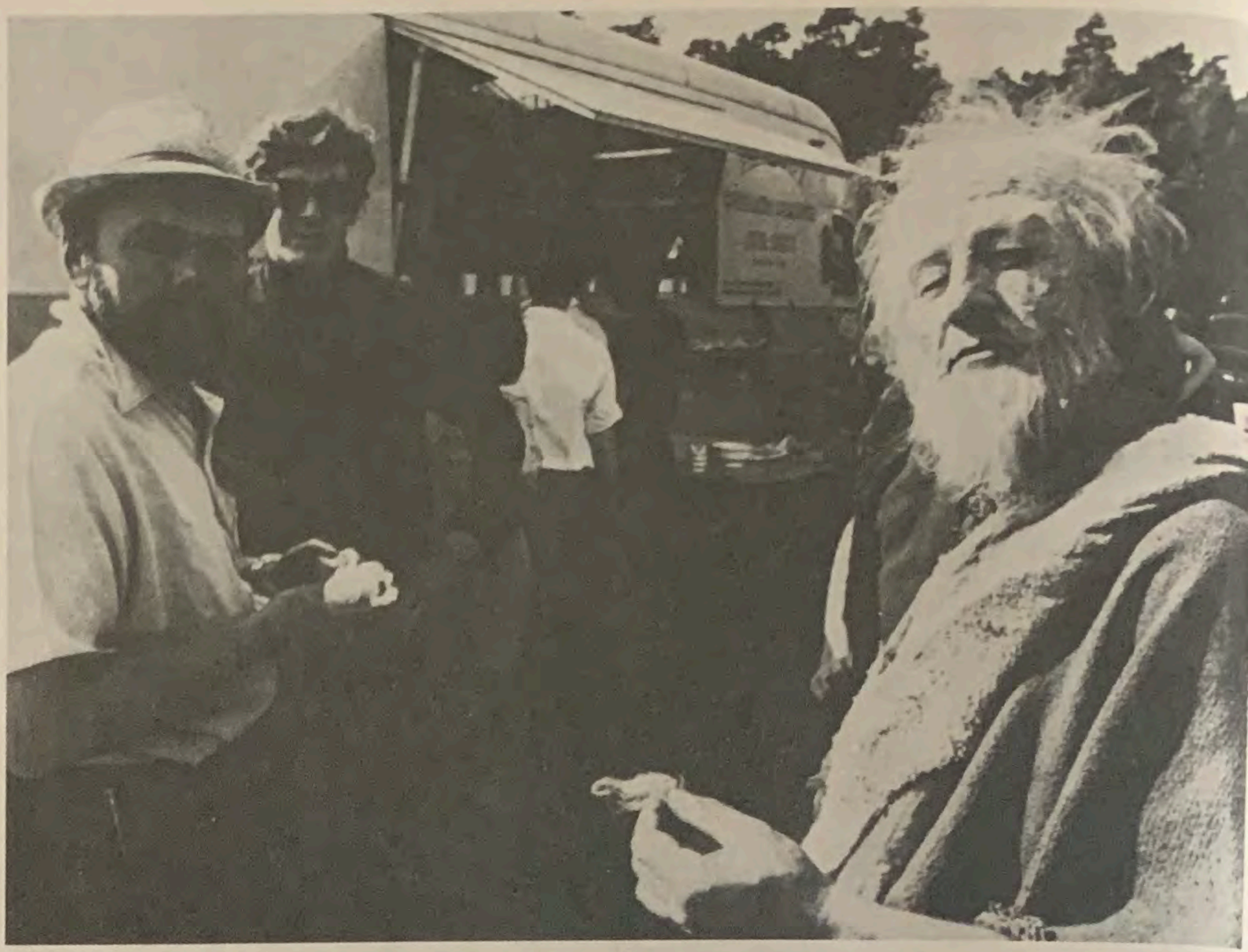


The Daleks (1963)



Christopher looks on as the lids are lowered on John Scott-Martin and Robert Jewell (*The Power of the Daleks*, 1966)

Twenty-one year old Maureen O'Brien at the BBC on 11th November 1964 on receiving the news that she has won the part of Vicki and will debut in *The Rescue* (1965)



(Above) Chris Barry and Peter Purves, on location for *The Savages* (1966)

ularly on the creation of the Dalek. We were drawing on the backs of envelopes the whole time with Raymond Cusick trying to find out how it should finally work.

Looking back on it now it was childishly simple compared with something like THE TRIPODS, which was technically far more difficult to do. We weren't into CSO — it was just overlay in those days (the same principle but in black and white). It was far cruder; some of those shots make me shudder when I look at them now! The Daleks themselves were easier to use than models because you could talk to the actors inside and get them to do things. We put numbers on them in rehearsal to help the cameramen as much as anything. They weren't quite as versatile as humans, of course, but once they'd got into practise and we discovered who was insid each shell we could get them to move where we wanted them t go.

The Rescue (1965)...

Maureen O'Brien was very young then and has become a very di tinguished actress since, but I don't remember any problems in h settling in. In one sequence William Hartnell had to come face face with Koquillion and be a bit physical to overcome him. looked at it the other day and thought it didn't work too bac actually.

The Romans (1965)...

This was done back-to-back with *The Rescue*, which was only two-parter. Some of the comedy worked while in the past fe years some of the comedy in DOCTOR WHO has failed dismall but I see nothing in principle against comedy as long as there menace as well. The format of comedy/thriller, if you like, has g to be maintained. When it just becomes a romp and there isn't a threat, then I think it fails.

I think *The Romans* was very ambitiou though looking at it the other day I wa appalled at some of the things I'd done. remember there was a scene in the galleys an a shipwreck which really, considering th resources (bits of film from the library and that sort of thing) didn't look at all bad. Nero was a comic character written specially for the late Derek Francis, who also played Wackford Squeers for me in *Nicholas Nickleby* in 1977, one of his last roles in television. Although he was comic, he was still menacing. You saw that his word was law, and if the Doctor and his companions did get out of line they were for it. That story would have looked good in colour. It would have given it depth, certainly, and texture.

The Savages (1966)...

We shot some of the location material in an old gravel pit near Chalfont St. Peter, somewhere along the line of the present M25. I cast Claire Jenkins, who also worked for me in MOONSTRIKE and who I've never heard of since. She wore skins that had been worn by

A camera-shy Shawcroft employee applies the finishing touches to Vicki's 'pet', the Sand Beast (*The Rescue*, 1965)

***The Daemons* (1971)**

Raquel Welch in *One Million Years B.C.* For guns we used fire extinguishers with a sort of nozzle on the front and they sent out a cloud of freezing carbon dioxide. We had to be careful not to freeze the actors' balls off (if you'll excuse the expression!) squirting it at them, so we had to aim slightly off and make sure our camera-angles were right. It gave a lovely effect; a sort of 'w-h-o-o-o-s-h' without any electronic nonsense.

Peter Purves felt that he wanted to expand his career in other directions. At the time he told me he wanted to do interviewing and presenting.

The Power of the Daleks (1966)...

I think Bill Hartnell was a very good Doctor Who, but I got disenchanted working with him. Patrick Troughton was an actor I'd worked with and knew well anyway so I was delighted to work with him. We worked together with Innes Lloyd on getting the character together. I know Sydney Newman, whose idea was Doctor Who, was very distraught at this space hobo, but I think the whimsical, slightly fay aspect caught on tremendously well. It was so different.

We had to do a sort of Dalek factory where they were all being made, and we filmed the production line down at Ealing. We managed to get loads of toy Daleks in and adapted them because their detail wasn't quite good enough, but it saved special-effects a lot of money. We shot it so that the scale was established by somebody in the foreground looking through a glass window into the 'factory'.

Bok and the real McCoy (*The Daemons*, 1971)

Before I returned to Who I did lots of other work in series and serials; Z Cars, period things...a lot of work. I kept away from Doctor Who deliberately for a while because I thought it was time producers saw that that wasn't all I could do and that I was interested in doing other work. As a staff director one didn't have to do things one didn't want to. It was possible to be paid and do nothing but I didn't find that a very happy situation, and I was fortunate to be constantly in work.

The Dæmons (1971) came along and Barry Letts said would I be interested? The script was particularly fun and archaeology is my hobby. Jon Pertwee was a big contrast from Patrick, an imposing figure.

It was done mostly in a village called Aldbourne in Wiltshire just near the M40, which was being built when we did it. It had a nice village green, a pub, a church, a minimum of modern interference, it wasn't on a main traffic route, and just on the hill out of the village were in fact the round barrows which we needed for that wind sequence. Also handy was a disused airfield which was very useful for the chase sequence with the car and helicopter and everything, so it all fell into place. I prefer working on location to studio on the whole because of the freedom it gives you. I think that to set things in ordinary, mundane surroundings and then have something bizarre go on is much more frightening then setting the whole thing in a theoretical hyperspace where anything could happen anyway.

Roger Delgado didn't have to cod it to look menacing, he just was, whereas I felt the more recent manifestation of the Master was, well, wasted in the scripts completely.

The Mutants (1972)...

I quite liked the idea, but it was plagued by this awful problem of how can you get monsters who are going to have human arms and legs to look like giant ants, but James Acheson did a marvellous job. It was a strange story and I think it worked. Garrick Hagon was very good as Ky, or K-Y Jelly as we rudely called him!

We had a model cave made of translucent fibreglass lit from behind with quite small lights, and then one camera on that and one on Jon Pertwee and Katy Manning. They were on the blue in the studio, just simple CSO, but it was quite effective. It was intercut for the wide open enormous long shots, but the little things like them running about and moving down the caves were done in Chiselhurst Caves, and they were lit by coloured lights. I think we wet the caves and put some glitter on just where it hit the highlighting.

It took six or seven simultaneous electronic sources to create Ky lighting up at the end. A firmly locked-off camera 1 showed the Marshal (Paul Whitsun-Jones) threatening the Doctor and the Investigator (Peter Howell). Camera 2 took Ky (Garrick Hagon) against CSO blue and this picture was fed to a monitor which

***The Creature from the Pit* (1979)**

camera 3 took as a soft, out-of-focus image. Coupled with cameras 2 and 3 was camera 4, panning down a rainbow-patterned background. Cameras 2, 3 and 4 were then faded into 1 to present the image of Ky appearing. To fire his blaster camera 5 took a shot of a moving light projection on a white card and this picture was fed through an isosceles-triangle-shaped mask on the inlay desk in the gallery, and this in turn was then faded in on top of the other picture. Next, it was necessary to break the recording and rewind the 'tape' of what we had just done while the Doctor and the Investigator froze their positions and the Marshal was cleared from the set. Recording was then restarted and mixed to the same combination of camera sources as before with the addition of a light glow provided by the sixth camera. As this intensified, the camera 5 blaster ray was faded out followed by the glow on camera 6, and at the same time the actors were cued to continue the scene. Finally, in a reverse of the start of the sequence, cameras 2, 3, and 4 were faded out and, with them, Ky. The scene was then held on camera 1 just as it had been at the start. It sounds complicated but was all very 'state of the art' at the time.

Robot (1974/5)...

I loved Tom from the word go, I thought he was such a vital person. He was always coming up with clever creative ideas and he'd always be humble about making them. He'd say, 'Slap me down if you don't like it, but...', and we used lots of his ideas. I remember trying to make use of all the props Tom had been given, particularly the scarf. We used it to trip up somebody who was chasing him, and also to drag things on. We shot it all electronically with the location stuff down at the BBC's Wood Norton Engineering Training Establishment, near Evesham, which we appeared to break up suitably, much to the delight of the engineers!

The Brain of Morbius (1976)...

A gothic tale that was lifted straight from the Frankenstein story and so one pitched it at that sort of level. It had certain horrific and fearsome aspects, but I think that's cathartic and I don't think that does any harm to people. I don't know what Mary Whitehouse was at on that one. With considerable hindsight, I think it probably was wrong to have the bullets that hit Condo splatter red, wet blood. We nearly set fire to Tom during that fire sequence with him tied to the stake. There were real flames in the studio which we superimposed onto him, and it got very hot.

The serial was subsequently made into a compact version for later transmission. At that time I was a staff director with the BBC and got wind that the producer was going to do this and I offered my assistance. He said thank you very much...and he didn't consult me at all. This was the first example I'd ever heard of a producer taking it upon himself to cut a director's work without consulting him, so I was very angry at not being consulted. When I saw what went out I wasn't altogether displeased.

The Creature from the Pit (1979)...

The cast was good and the acting was good. The monster was the problem, it just wasn't viable. It's all very well for a writer to put on the page a description of a monster, but then somebody's got to transcribe it into a physical being, and I think on that one we failed. I'm obviously held partly responsible, and the Visual Effects Department had to take some of the responsibility. We had an inquest on it afterwards. It was impossible to fulfil the requirements of the script - this thing was supposed to have this lon proboscis that came down the corridor in front of it. In the stud we saw this great green penis coming round the corner and ever body roared with laughter. Graham Williams, the producer, sai 'You can't have that, you can't have that!' We had to remake t model in the studio.

Dear Myra Francis was super as Lady Adrasta. It was so ove the-top but it was humorous because she was supposed to be a so of dictator who'd gone beserk. Tom's was the sort of humour I could bring in in moments of tension and break the tension, b then the next moment his foot slips or something. That Hitchcock of course — disarm people with comedy, then sudden frighten them. I think it's a sort of symbiosis. If the script sugges you can go into that area, then you extend it and hope that yo don't go too far. In fact by this time Tom had got so much into th character that I found him a little bit harder to control and ove bearing. At rehearsals one day I shut up, stood by him and waite till he'd finished expounding how the scene ought to be playe bless him. Tom had done it for so long he thought he knew better than we did, but there was no personal animosity about it It's just a bit embarrassing for the director who suddenly find himself taking a back seat with his cast!

I think it got to the point where it became jolly romp time and I didn't find it amusing or intriguing enough to go on watching regularly. By the time you get to the one with Kate O'Mara and the Master (*The Mark of the Rani, 1985*) — that was so ridiculous. Why bring in Kate O'Mara, unless it was just a 'Showbiz giggle'? I've seen that sort of thing happen with showbusiness people, sort of, 'Wouldn't it be fun to have...'.

After I'd been working on ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL, I met Peter Davison on the staircase of Threshold House and he said he had just been offered the part of DOCTOR WHO and should he take it. I said, 'I don't think you should do it'. He obviously decided that he should do it, but I never felt he was right in the role. When Colin Baker took over (whom I've also worked with in the past), I thought he was more right, but I still think there's something wrong in the chemistry of the programme. I honestly haven't watched enough to analyse it. I just got bored with it quite honestly.

THE TRIPODS (*1985*)...

The producer, Richard Bates, is hoping to complete the trilogy.

but I gather the Head of Series/Serials was less than enthusiastic about the idea because it's very demanding in money and resources. I think there should be another series because the last episode of the second series left people on a terrible downer, particularly if they've read the books and know there's more to come.

The viewing ratings were around four million, then it had a slightly slow patch after an episode of mine which I never liked (episode three). That reflected in the viewing figures for episode four which went down, a cracking good episode if I say so myself, and the figures started to leap again. By episode twelve they were going up by half a million a week. I think the BBC was to blame in its scheduling for it not getting the audience it deserved.

Talk of it being a replacement series for Doctor Who started when I was rung up when we were doing series one by a journalist on *The Standard*. She asked me that very question and then misquoted me as saying, 'This is the new Doctor Who', and John Nathan-Turner was very rude to me the next day. It wasn't a replacement for Doctor Who because it was a completely different type of story. It was based on a book, which Doctor Who never was, and it was a finite story in three series.

I've considered being a producer and in fact have worked as an associate producer, but I've never really relished the role. I certainly don't think I would relish the role of producer of Doctor Who. I think it's become very much what John Nathan-Tumer made of it; very much a sort of impresario product with a lot of jamborees and publicity and all that sort of thing, which he's got a wonderful flair for. But it certainly wouldn't suit me, not that sort of life." ❑

● **Interviewed by Guy Clapperton**

● **Postscript:** *It was soon after working on the first series of The Tripods that I left my post as a drama staff director at the BBC, founding my own company, All Directions Ltd ("will go anywhere, direct anything...", geddit?!). I continued to work as a freelance, the second Tripods series being my first job. As I said earlier, the fact that there was not to be a final, third series was a tremendous disappointment to me as much as to the viewers who had grown to like it. Richard Bates went on for some years trying to get a third series, or at least a one-off episode that would wrap up the whole trilogy even, I believe, trying ITV companies as well but unfortunately without success. Of course, the lack of the final part of the story has made it very much harder to justify repeat showings, and there is little chance of videos or overseas sales, which is a great shame.*

But that was not the end of my life at the BBC. For the next five years the bulk of my work was to be as a guest drama tutor at the Television Training Unit at Elstree on both film and video courses, giving a bit of "know-how" to budding directors as well as to vision-mixers and production managers.

My work at Elstree culminated by my writing, appearing in and producing a BBC training double video, Making a Drama of It. In this, I am seen going through all the stages of setting up the filming of a short piece of suspense drama and then directing the action itself on film. The whole documentary was directed for me by Nicholas Laughland, my production manager on The Tripods, who was just setting out as a director at that time.

My next actual broadcast project (and to date my last!) was for the late lamented TSW. It was a children's drama shown in the networked Dramarama series; a half-hour story called Mitchin' (sic) set in Plymouth, mainly on the Tamar and shot during a glorious summer all on location. A most happy assignment and one I had hoped would lead to more.

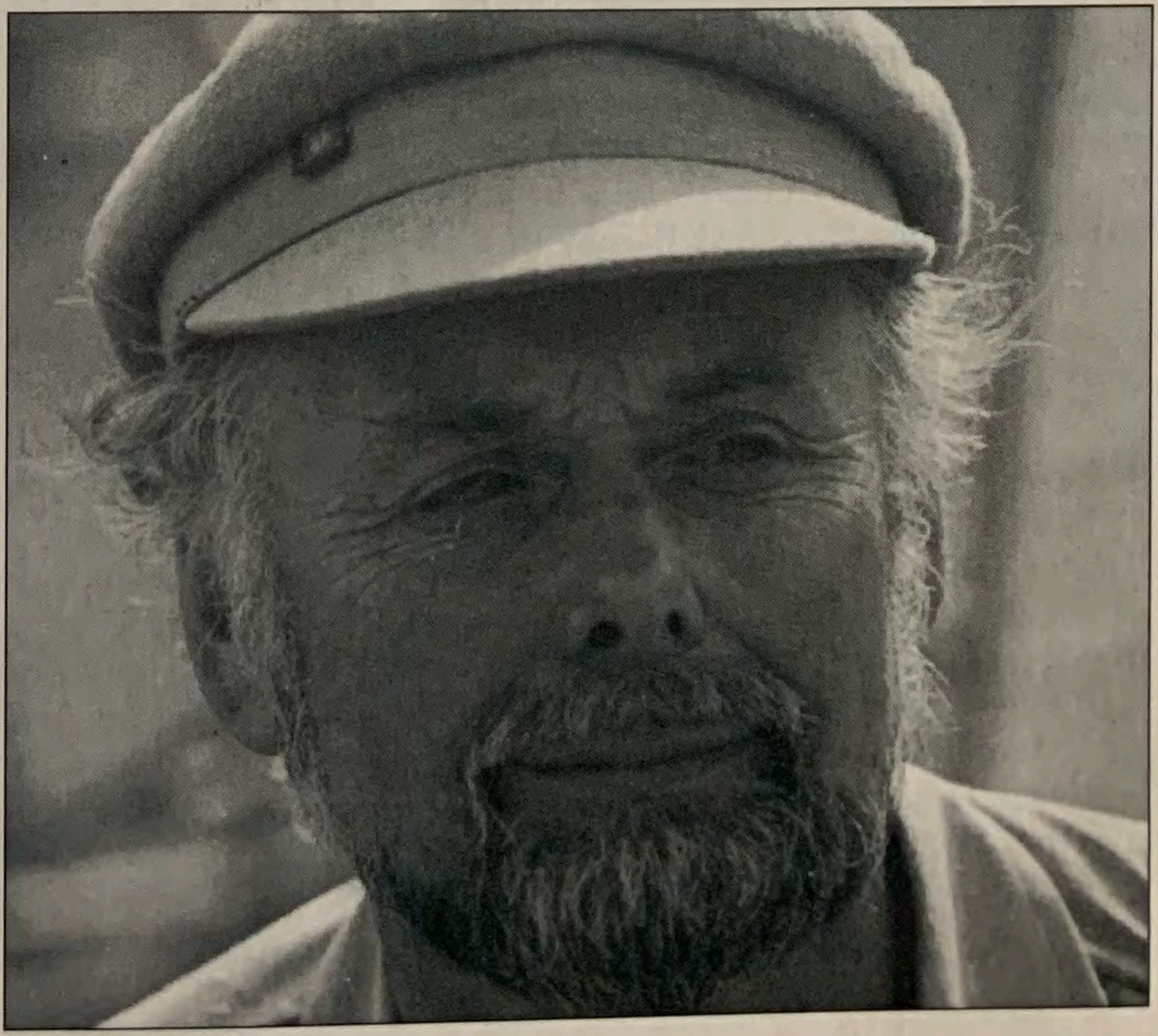
As everyone knows (except, perhaps, Danny Baker and those making the documentary tribute to him recently on BBC1 in the Television Heroes series!), Peter Purves has had a very successful career as a presenter and commentator and founded his own company for the purpose. As these things happen our paths crossed again in 1990 when he asked me to direct a corporate video for him for a Cow & Gate medical product. The success of this encouraged Peter to ask me to do another corporate shoot for him, this time for the West End advertising agency, BMP Business. TV's own favourite film-buff, Barry Norman, was the front man and it was fun meeting and working with him as I had worked for his (late) father early in my career at Ealing.

Christopher Barry's sons enjoying the hey day of 'Dalekmania' (1964)

All this may seem a long way from Doctor Who, but in fact I was never to be very far away from it. I have attended many conventions in places as far apart as London, Swansea, Exeter, Bournemouth, Manchester, Aylesbury and - last November (at last!) - Chicago, USA. I say "at last" because for many years now I have been angling to get on the USA convention circuit with absolutely no success. It was Lis Sladen (bless her!) who gave me the necessary introduction for Chicago, and a lot of fun it was too.

Other Who activities include the lecture I gave at the Museum of the Moving Image on the South Bank during their Doctor Who season (in this I was able to give an illustrated biographical survey of my long association with the programme), and I also appeared with Jon Pertwee, Nicholas Courtney, Richard Franklin and John Levene, re-visiting some of the locations where we had filmed scenes for The Dæmons twenty years before. It was an exciting reunion and made a very good video.

My association with Keith Barnfather brings this c.v. right up to date as we are hoping to work together on a drama video spin-of from Doctor Who by Marc Platt called Downtime, which will star several previous Who actors and characters. We had hoped to get it made last year for the thirtieth anniversary, but that was not to be. Wish us well for the future. - ***Christopher Barry, January 1994***

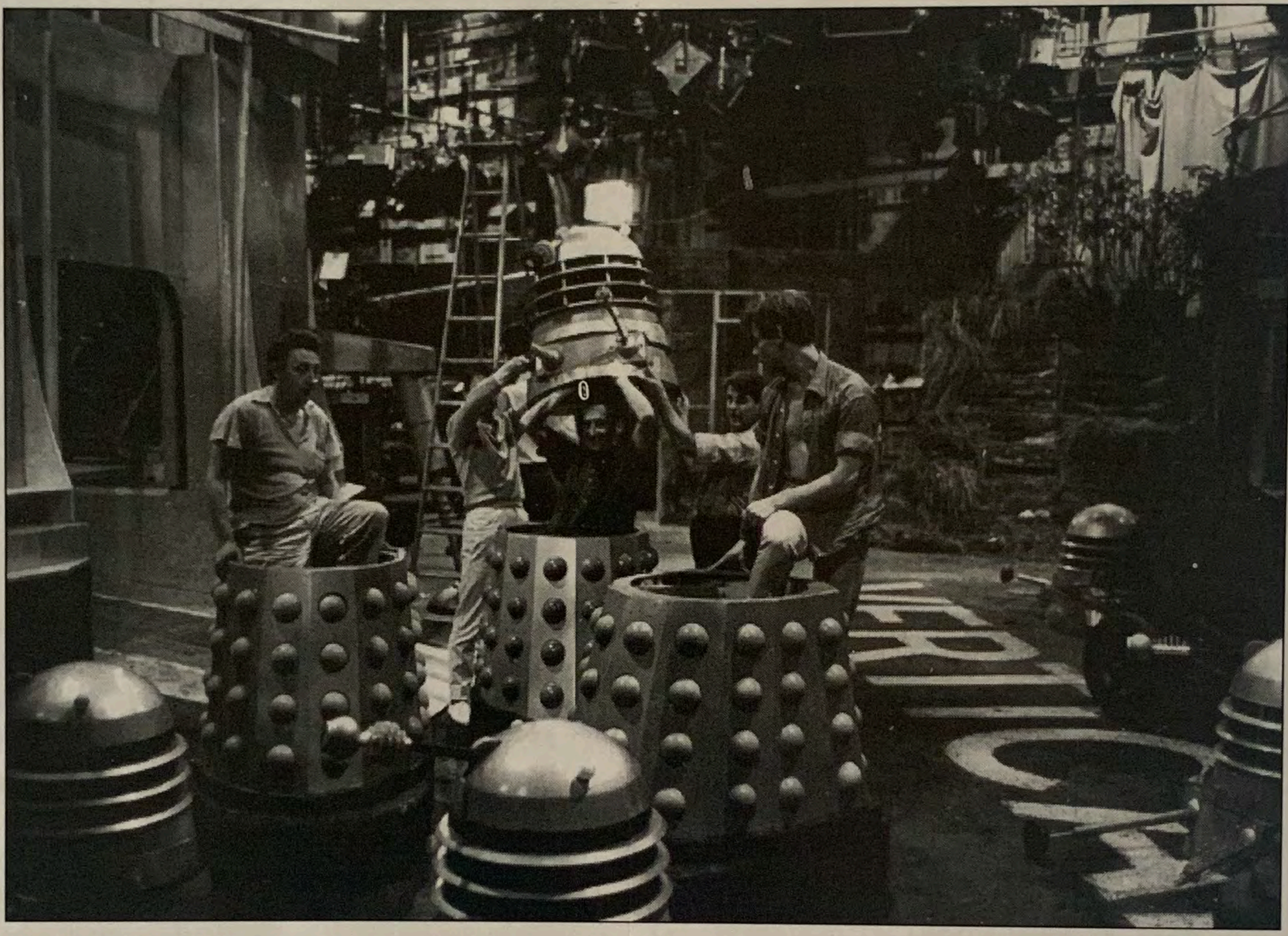


1963 the monsters 1969

Jewell & Manser

"We were pigeon-holed at the BBC as operators"
- March-April 1987

ROBERT JEWELL: My story goes right back to my teenage days when I was doing an engineering course. I was asked if I would like to understudy the comedy lead in a church stage show of *Mummy and the Mumps*, and then the lead had to drop out of it so I played Racker. From there I went into the Melbourne theatres and I also did chorus work, among other things.



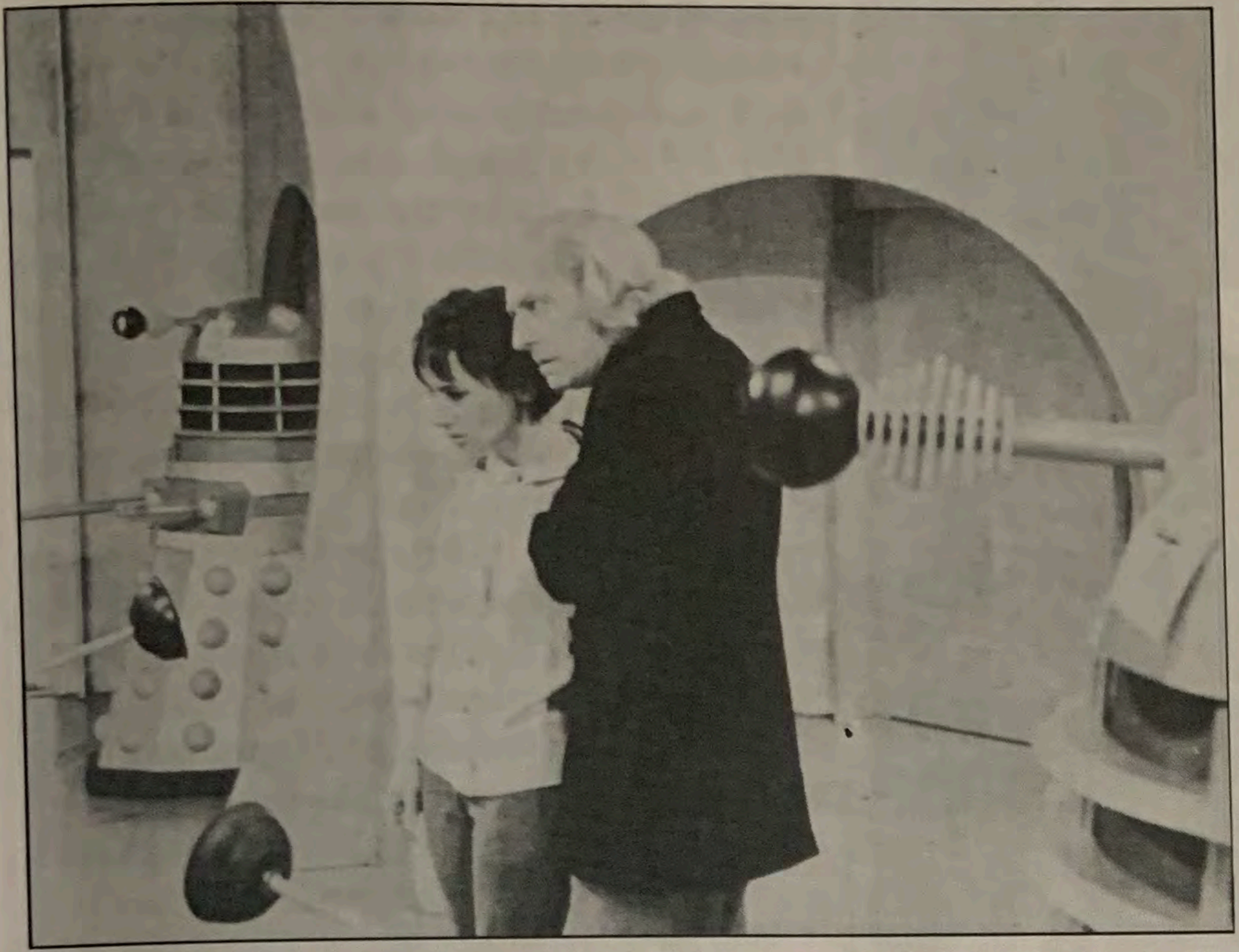
Robert Jewell (second from right) assists Kevin Manser (centre). (Far left) Murphy Grumbar, (far right) Nick Evans (*The Dalek Invasion of Earth*, 1964)

KEVIN MANSER: I became interested in drama at University and I decided that I wanted to become a professional actor (television was just starting in Australia, in 1956, with the Olympic Games to be exact). People interested in pursuing a career in TV decided that the only place to do it was either in England or America, and I chose to go to England because I wanted to remain British in my thoughts. I came to England in 1959 and found myself an agent in London and he got me a job in repertory. As it turned out, my first major break was, quite by chance, as a little, bald Australian character (rather like myself!) called Barney in a play called *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, which was the first major work to come to the West End of London from Australia. While I was in rep for two years I had to learn other accents like the Cockney, the Scottish and Irish, and even a Brooklyn cabbie! I began to get buried there and I was keen to get back to London because nobody sees your work in the provinces.

After a play called *Inherit the Wind* folded, I joined the company of *On the Brighter Side* in 1962 and the stars of the show were Stanley Baxter, Betty Marsden, Una Stubbs, Judi Carne, and the feed was Ronnie Barker who I was to understudy (this was his first show and he was covering Stanley Baxter). We went on tour and it was a smash hit, and we came back to London where it ran for nine months. Then I went on to do other shows with the same management, but never as successful as that one.

RJ: I'd always admired the English acting profession, so finally, after becoming divorced, I went in 1963. I joined an agent and it didn't matter what I did, and it just happened that DOCTOR WHO was starting at that time. I got a call - having spent three weeks in and out of bed with flu - from my agent sayin ‘Would you like come in - it loo like I've got som thing for you wi the BBC. They wa people of a certa height...' - I'm fai stocky but short '...to operate machine. It does sound as if it w help your care much but it will p your rent - and th want to see a photo!' We couldn't understand why on earth, if I' going to work a machine and I'm not going to be seen, th wanted to see a photo! So she sent a photo to the BBC, they call me in and talked to me, and I got a job as a Dalek! I was ask whether I could handle driving or moving things, because that w basically what we had to do.

KM: When I was out of work I would go to a place called Th Soup Kitchen in Fleet Street, where all the other out of work actors used to go. We all worked on a roster system feeding these Fleet Street journalists and we'd get a free lunch and tips (we all had to do things like that to survive between jobs). One day Tracey, who ran the kitchen, said, ‘Didn't you work with Christopher Barry last Easter? He's doing a new show called DOCTOR WHO and they're looking for some monsters. Why don't you give them a ring?' I rang Christopher's secretary and she said, ‘How tall are you?' I said five feet and five inches, and she said ‘Oh? Would you consider being a monster?' I asked, ‘Will I be seen?', and she said ‘Well, not really...' I said, ‘Good, because I won't spoil my chances for any other work!' As I'd worked for the BBC before they already had my photo on file, so I went to see Christopher and he asked me whether I'd be interested in being a ‘mutation'. At the time of the interview they didn't know whether they wanted to use actors or dancers because nobody had seen the costumes and had no idea what they would look like or how they'd



William Hartnell and Carole Ann Ford surrounded by numbered Daleks (*The Daleks*, 1963)

Robert Jewell gives directions to William Hartnell (*The Feast of Steven*, 1965)

move. They decided to use actors because we had to learn the lines at rehearsals.

RJ: It was intended that we were to do our own lines because we were employed as actors, not as machine operators, but they found that they couldn't record the voice they wanted properly coming out of a machine. It was diffused too much so they had to think of different ways of doing it and they then got Peter Hawkins in. He worked off the set behind the scenes looking into a monitor and they distorted his voice electronically.

KM: We couldn't do the voices ourselves for the simple reason that we were moving around in the studio all of the time and it would have been very impractical. We had to know the lines, though, in order to know when to flash the lights on and off in unison with Peter Hawkins who was up in the recording room distorting his voice through a recorder. During recording we could hear his voice booming around in the studio and Bill Hartnell would act to that voice in the air and react to us physically. Each Dalek developed a sort of personality because there were two actors doing different voices for each Dalek, although Peter was the one who mainly did it at rehearsals.

> *"The first casings they had to redo because the wheels on the bases could only go in one direction"*

The first rehearsal for *The Daleks* (*1963*) we just got the moves worked out and walked around, but we *still* hadn't seen what we were going to operate. In those days we'd rehearse for five days, I think it was, and then we'd have a recording day and rehearse the actual movements inside the studios, because the whole thing was recorded in one hit.

RJ: Up to the first rehearsal they were still talking about how they were going to operate it and how they were going to make it move, and finally they got down to doing it on the very basic idea of us pushing it around with our feet. I used to do it with my knees against the side and then press outwards while I moved my feet to push it around. We all had different methods and we each adapted ourselves to doing it our own ways.

KM: The first casings they had to re-do because the wheels on the bases could only go in one direction! The final version had a bar in the middle of the shell and a seat on the bar so we could spin the machines with our bodies and move them by running our plimsolled feet along the floor. In front of us there was a panel where we pressed the various buttons to make the lights flash on the dome, and there was that suction thing that we had to extend in and out and the little ray gun which was one of those utensils that you whisk up eggs with. We used to look through the mesh in the neck section to see out and we had to work the eye to go up and down and around and around, and the dome had to rotate as well.

We all had our own machines, I suppose because we preferred it that way. I know in the first story we had numbers put on us in rehearsal because Christopher Barry didn't know who was who when we were inside the machines. When we were recording he would say 'Dalek 1, do this, Dalek 2, do that', because they all looked exactly the same to him!

RJ: I'm very mechanically-minded and I used to do weight-lifting, so it didn't worry me about pushing or shoving around any weights. I think I was, to put it bluntly - and I don't mind saying it - the most co-ordinated of the lot because I could work things very quickly.

KM: I don't think they got anyone in specifically to co-ordinate us, I think it was the director. If you'd seen us at rehearsals it was hysterical! We used to sit in the bottom half and have our hands stuck out in front of our heads and glide right up to Bill Hartnell. To start off with everyone just fell about, we couldn't keep a straight face, but in the end it all became so routine. You just sat down doing this and that and flashing your lights on and off. They marked out the studio's plan on the floor so you knew where everything was. We had to do everything to the right scale and manage to get the machines in and out of all those sorts of angles, and that's how we did all of the 'choreography'. We couldn't afford to make mistakes.

We were originally booked for six weeks, and suddenly Doctor Who took the ratings. They wrote more Dalek stories and we worked on every one of them, forming our own sort of Dalek union because we were just so determined that the ones who were operating the machines were going to be used all of the way through! We used to get fan mail - a couple of letters a week between us - addressed to 'The Daleks'. One was from a 13-year-old who refused to go off to Spain with his family for a holiday because he would miss the Daleks, so they had to cancel!

RJ: They were a lovely crowd, Bill Russell and Jacqueline Hill, and I became good friends with Bill Hartnell as well. We used to go and visit him at his home.

KM: There was never very much disagreement at all between us, in fact we'd all go to the BBC canteen for lunch together. Towards the end maybe Bill got a bit tetchy, but then he had a lot to cope with. He was always pleasant to the Dalek operators as people, but

Nick Evans (*The Dalek Invasion of Earth*, 1964), Murphy Grumbar (*The Chase*, 1965)

I think it was perhaps on a management level where his tetchiness crept in.

RJ: He was just the type of person he played when he was doing the Sergeant in THE ARMY GAME. He was very abrupt; even speaking to him in normal conversation he would be very aggressive if he wanted to make a point of something. I don't think he was any more irascible towards the end than when he started, except that he always said what he felt and thought. He was certainly a perfectionist. If the scripts contained lines about something which was scientific, he would read up as much as he could that related to it so he knew what he was talking about.

A funny thing happened during rehearsals one day. The TV Daleks had this sucker arm with this plumber's thing on the end and I was swinging the arm around to do something and it caught on one of Jacqueline Hill's bosoms! She squealed a bit and I said, 'Cup B, Cup B, Cup B...'! It was a bit of a joke for quite a while.

KM: I learn't so much about filming techniques from being inside one of those Dalek machines which has helped me all through my life as an actor, such as superimposing and trick photography. We watched the whole of that happening from in the studio, such as the chase in the lift scene where we go from one level to another. They had a black cloth at the back and they superimposed a Dalek going up in the lift by tilting the camera slowly upwards. One of the most astounding effects I saw was a Thal being sucked down into a whirlpool. They had him on a black cloth while a camera focussed on water going down a sink swirling round and round, and he started writhing about and they superimposed the two together. They also made photographic life-size Dalek cutouts in addition to the four casings and placed them in strategic positions.

We used to glide around with hand fans because, when we were doing a shoot, we'd have to stay in there until it was finished. Then each of us had to have the top section lifted off, but a lot of the time they just forgot we were even in them. They'd go off for a teabreak and we'd be left sitting in there yelling, 'Let us out of these bloody things!'

RJ: I got sick and tired of this routine, but because of my weight lifting I was strong enough to lift the top up myself and climb out, and the others would still be left in their machines! Also, to get from one set to the other side of the studio where the next shot was going to be taken you had all these cables in the way so they had to lift them up so you could go underneath. I couldn't wait for people to lift the cables up and we had a bar inside the machine going from the back to the front which was for the little seat we sat on so I used to grab hold of that and lift the whole thing up and walk across the set over the cables carrying the machine itself!

KM: Sometimes it was quite good fun because people would lean against your Dalek little realising that there was somebody still in there reading, having a short nap or whatever, waiting for the next scene, and you often heard little snippets of gossip while you were sitting in there

RJ: Nobody had ever worked with machines like the Daleks before, where people were there but concealed. Quite often some of the things they started to say were a little bit way out and we'd be giggling to ourselves. Then we'd suddenly wiggle the eye or gun and they'd run for their lives, and of course they wouldn't know which of us was in which machine!

Dalek tea-break (*The Chase*, 1965)

The Dalek Invasion of Earth (1964)...

We were at Trafalgar Square at something like 5am to catch the very early dawn and miss the heavy traffic, and there were some bodies across the road coming home from parties who were half stoned and didn't know what on earth was going on!

KM: They fitted the machines with bicycle-like pedals to enable them to glide along more easily over the rough terrain instead of pushing with our feet, so they had to be built up higher. We had to pedal in front instead of up and down so it was really hard work, especially going across Westminster Bridge which has a rise on it.

RJ: It was Richard Martin, the director's, idea, but it was the worst thing in the world and we were pedalling like mad. To put it bluntly it was lousy, terrible! When we got to gutters and cobble-stoning we couldn't do anything. Flat paths or roads were fine, and Trafalgar Square we seemed to find quite suitable.

In one scene they had a Dalek right down into the water on two tracks, covered, with a wire attached to the bottom to pull it out. They got to the stage where the top was free, stopped the camera, took the top off and I climbed in (I was in bathers because the water was high up in the bottom section). The top was put back on and they pulled it right up until I could get a grip with my feet to move it. It was quite complicated, really, because they had to tie up the shots so that you didn't get any switch of movement.

I didn't push myself to be 'lead' Dalek, but I suppose I was more adaptable and able to do things than the others. I did all the Daleks that worked the control panels, etc.

The Dalek films (1965/6)...

Peter Cushing wasn't aggressive like William Hartnell and he wasn't quite as outlandish as Patrick Troughton, but he achieved a nice combination.

KM: I liked the whole concept of William Hartnell and the grandfather/granddaughter relationship, but I liked Peter's version too. He was a bit different but his concept was fairly similar.

In those days at the BBC you rehearsed the script and then you did the whole thing in the studio from start to finish of the episode, but doing the first movie was entirely different. Being film you jump all over the place; you'll do all the scenes with certain characters on one day and all scenes with other characters on another. Doctor Who uses filming today, of course, but in the old days you had this enormous studio with actors walking from one scene to another with the cameras in the centre zapping across here and there.

They used us in the first film because we'd been using the machines on television, and we were able to advise them on how to make their Daleks because they couldn't get the BBC's, which were copyright. They had to build new machines which were basically the same but slightly bigger.

RJ: There was more time to do the films and they were a bit more specific about what they wanted. They worked everything out to the finest detail, for example when we did our minor side scenes they still went to a lot of trouble to lay down planks for the Daleks to go on.

When I was doing the first film, Gordon Flemyng, the director, asked Kevin to do something (he just picked anyone at first) and I'm afraid he was not very good mechanically or in flexibility. He made Gordon Flemyng *mad*: 'Can't I get you to do anything?!' So he said, 'Hey Bob, can you do it?' I did it, and after that he said, 'Right, if anything I want special done I want you to do it'. I did all the special work on the first film, although I don't think it was mentioned in the credits, and when they did the second film he specifically asked for me to do it. I was the only BBC operator in the second film, but in the first there was also Kevin, Gerry Taylor and Murphy Grumbar, who, incidentally, changed his name from Peter Murphy.

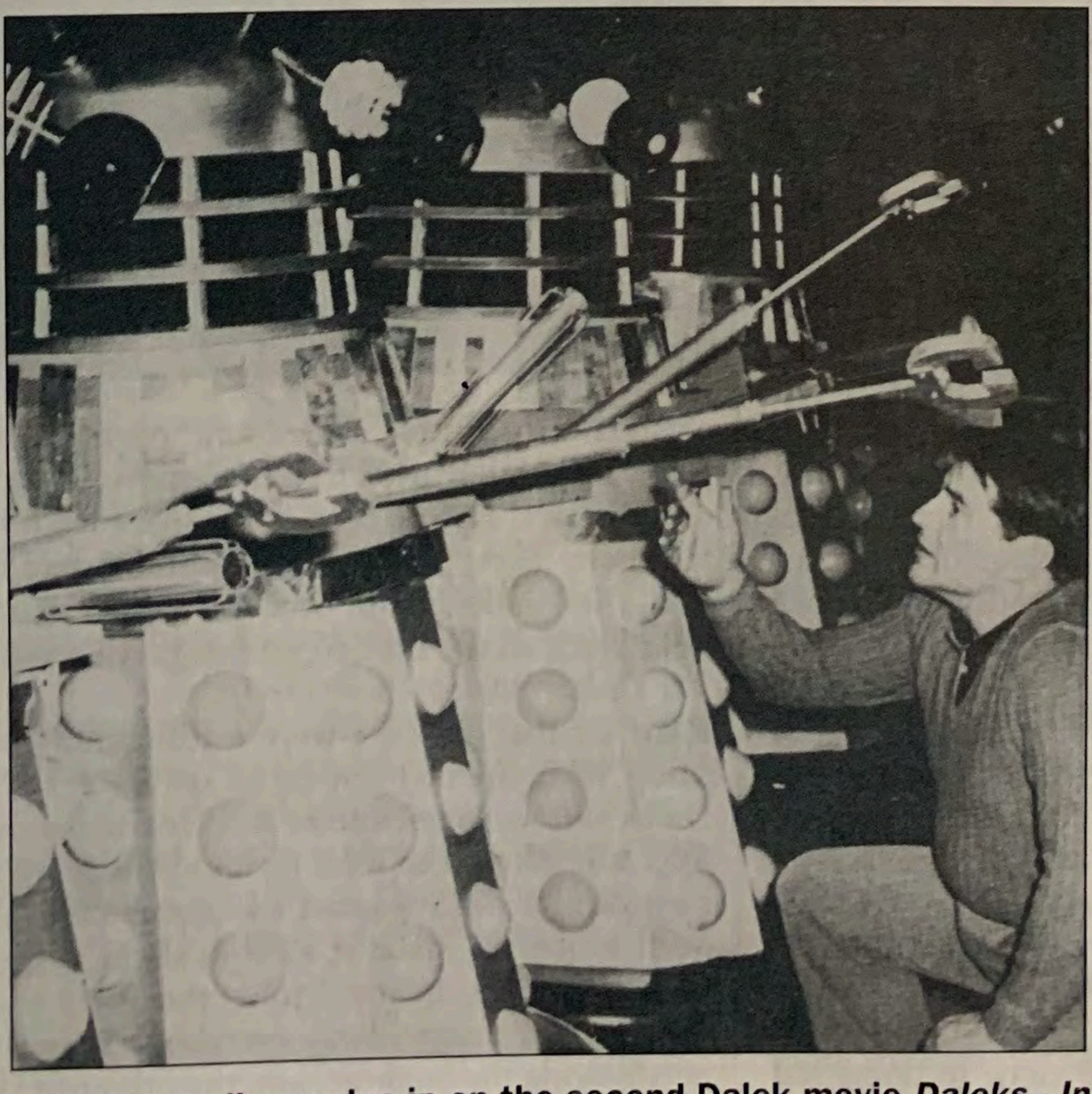
KM:There was not much of a pecking order, really, until towards the end of my association on the show when the second Dalek film came around. There was a lot of discontent about that because Aaru, the film company, were cutting costs and they wanted to use extras to be the Daleks. We wouldn't agree to work for extras' money, even Robert, but he got himself into the position where he said, 'Alright, you employ me and I'll teach the extras'. That's the way I and the others saw it. There was a little bit of dissention about that because the rest of us agreed that we would not work for extras' money. That caused the falling out and I wasn't particularly interested in playing a Dalek any longer. We thought it had sort of run its time and somebody almost intimated to me that there weren't going to be so many Dalek episodes coming up. I was also thinking of coming back to Australia.

The Web Planet (1965)...

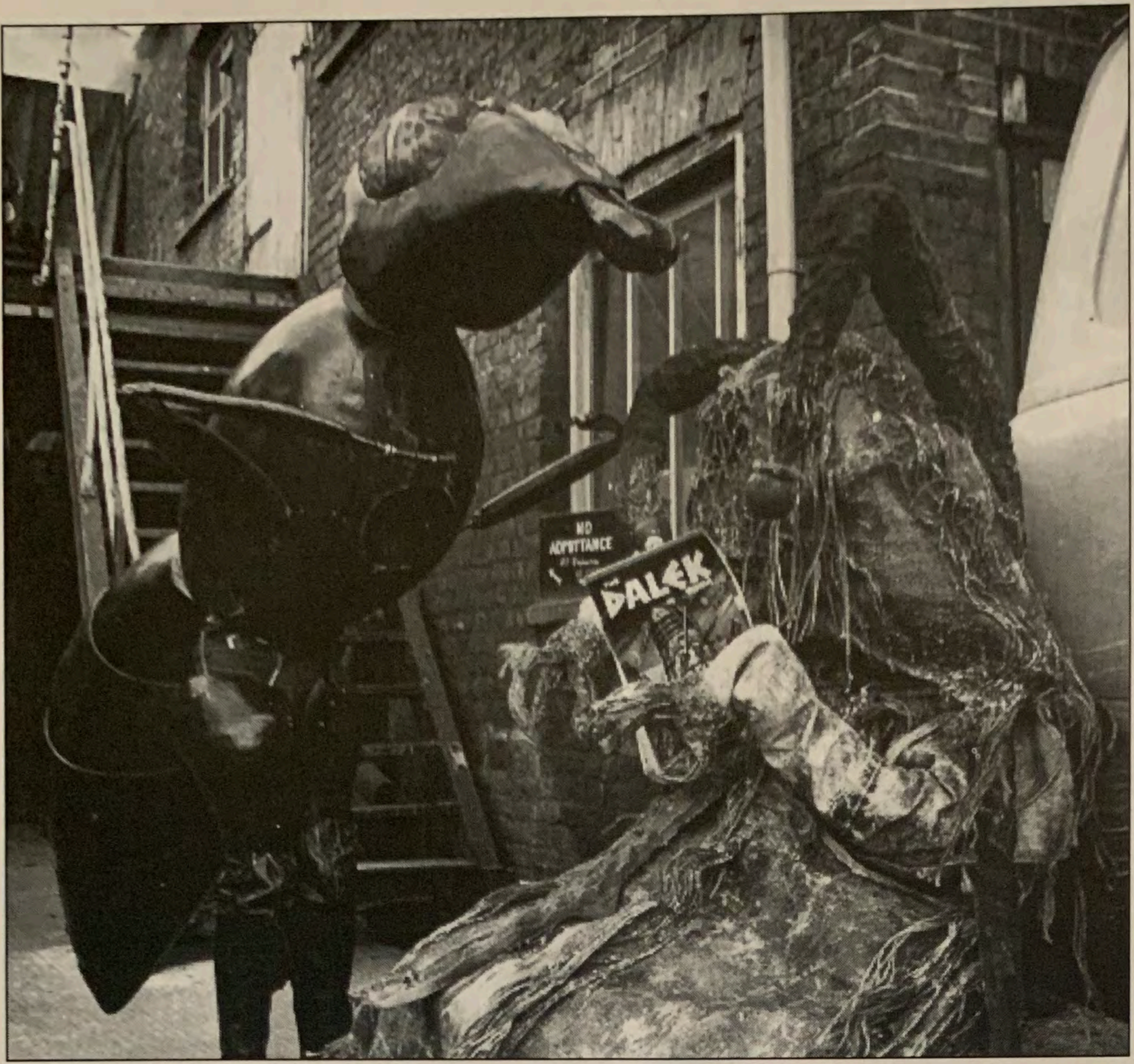
After a while we were pigeon-holed at the BBC as 'operators', meaning we weren't stunt men and we weren't actors, and whenever there was anything like that to do - and not just in Doctor Who - 'Oh, get in the Dalek boys, they'll do it!' That's how we all ended up as Zarbi. We didn't mind, we were getting work and we also worked on other shows as operators.

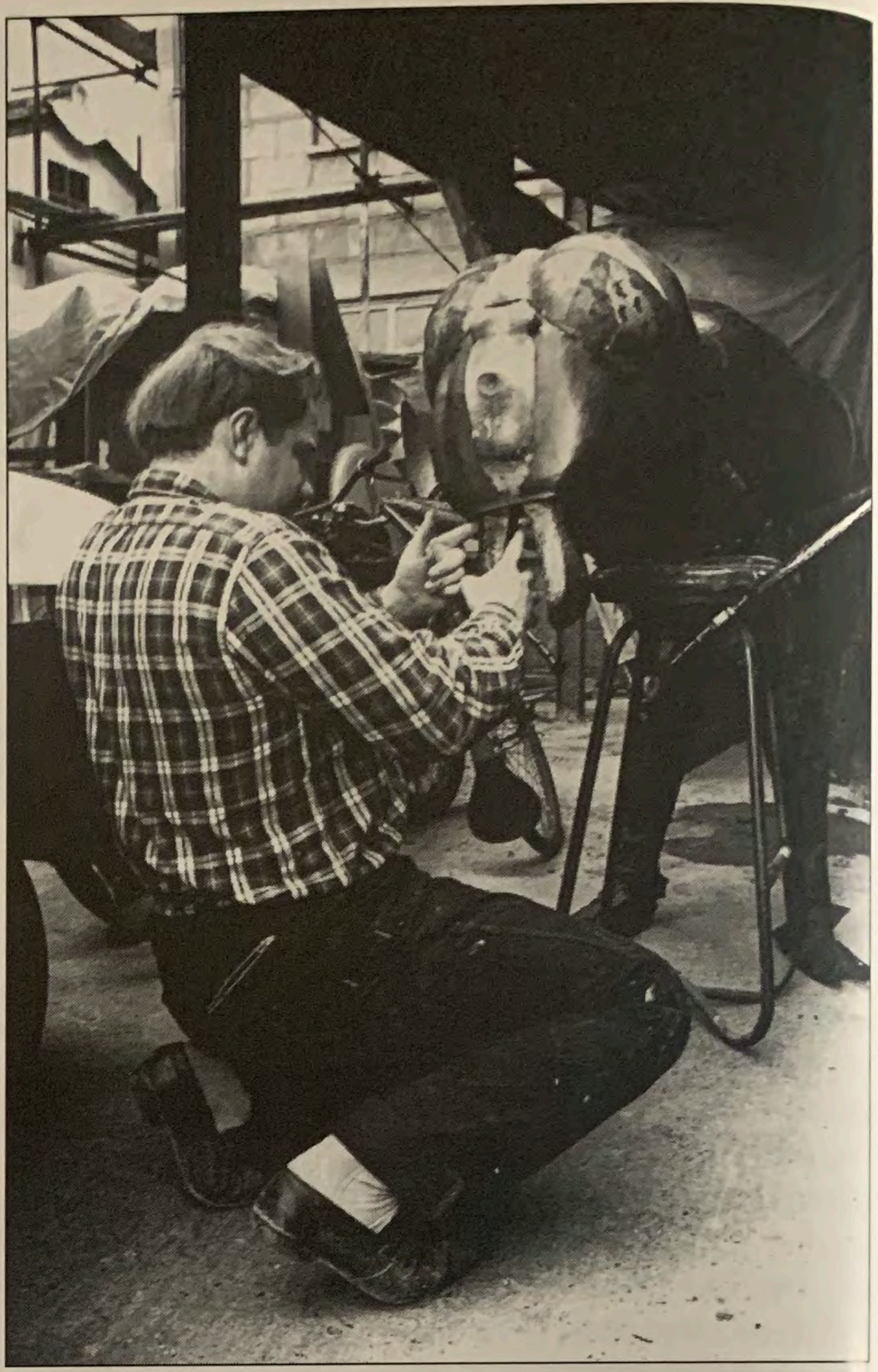
RJ: I was the thickest-set of all the operators, and they said if they could fit the Zarbi to me then it will fit all the others. So I went along to Shawcraft - who made the Daleks as well - and they had these fibre glass body pieces which they fitted to me. Well, at the factory it was fine, they fitted, but then the time came for us to wear them in the studio and we found that, for some reason or other, they seemed to have shrunk! They were tighter, and when they tried to fit them to me they were pinching me right, left, up and down the sides, it was terrible. It was alright for the others because they were all thinner than me, and it used to take us at least 45 minutes to get ourselves ready.

If you look at ants (because that's what they were, basically, giant ants), they've got that long tail to balance their bodies, but when they made the costumes for us to wear we found that the tails were too long and we couldn't



Robert Jewell muscles in on the second Dalek movie *Daleks - Invasion Earth 2150 AD* (1966)





(Above) The Slyther (*The Dalek Invasion of Earth*, 1964) relaxes with a copy of the first Dalek annual. (Right and below) The Zarbi costumes were built by Shawcraft in Uxbridge

stand up - we had to do everything bent over! When they said take a rest before doing the next scene we had to stay standing, so we ended up standing on these little boxes on the edge of the set with the tail hung down behind.

KM:We had a harness over our shoulders which had a sort of a long spine which ran down our backs. First of all we had to put it on, then we had to bend over and they put this great big tail on (I got a slipped disc out of it, I might add), then they put the head on the top part of the frame. We were inside the body with our arms crossed working all of these arms and we couldn't stand up!

RJ: Once on we were stuck in these costumes and we couldn't get a proper drink, so one of the assistants used to poke a straw up through the mesh in the front of the body, and if we felt hot he'd hold a fan against the mesh and cool us down.

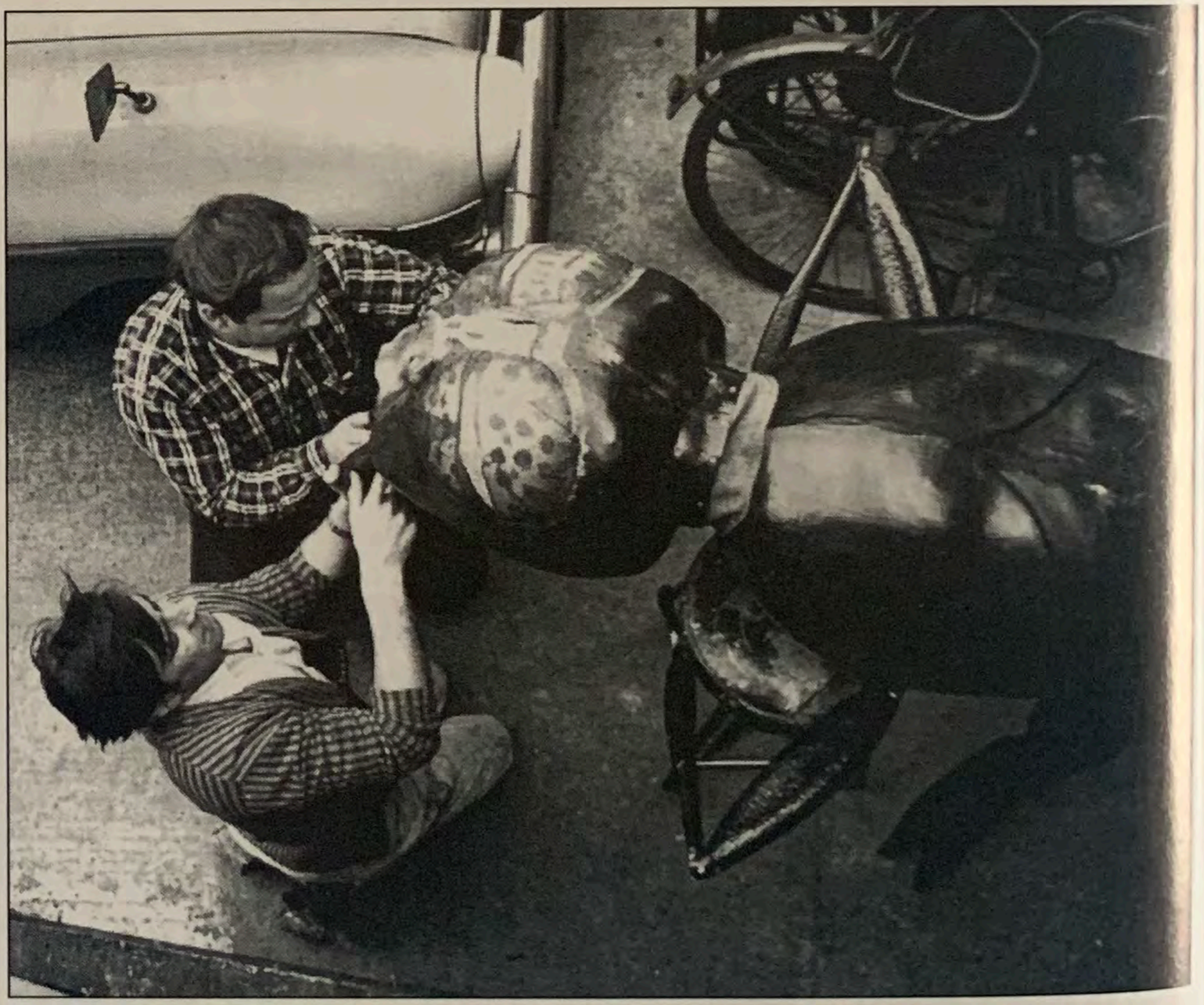
KM: I shall never forget the very first shot of the TARDIS coming in to land. Right in the middle of the studio was this great, polystyrene anthill about twenty feet high and they said, 'Climb up the ladder and get on top of there' (in the first shot the TARDIS crew see an ant on top of an anthill) and I couldn't believe it! I climbed up there and the dresser climbed up with me and dressed me on top of this anthill for this one shot! I thought I was going to fall off!

It was so cumbersome operating those bloody things because you couldn't see properly. We'd be running along these rostrums, fall over and finish up with our legs in the air and we couldn't get up! It was terrible. I remember Bill Hartnell wasn't too happy about that series because he fell over some broken glass.

The Chase...

I don't know why the Mechonoids didn't take off. I think the Daleks were too well established at this stage and they just couldn't get rid of them or invent a machine big enough — or with a personality strong enough — to exterminate the exterminators! I don't feel it was one of the better ones - as far as I'm concerned, with storylines you just do them - but it was fun doing that as well.

There was a battle scene, I remember, and they had a flash-pan on the back of my machine so when one of the other machines shot at me it would burst into flames. When it came to doing it I crashed into another Dalek and, on the point of collision, the lid part - which they used to clamp on - opened up a fraction, the flash went off at the same time and a spark leapt inside the machine and burnt my back. It was very painful. I had a black nylon shirt on which was unfortunate because the nylon melted (we were told to wear black all the time so we couldn't be seen through the mesh).

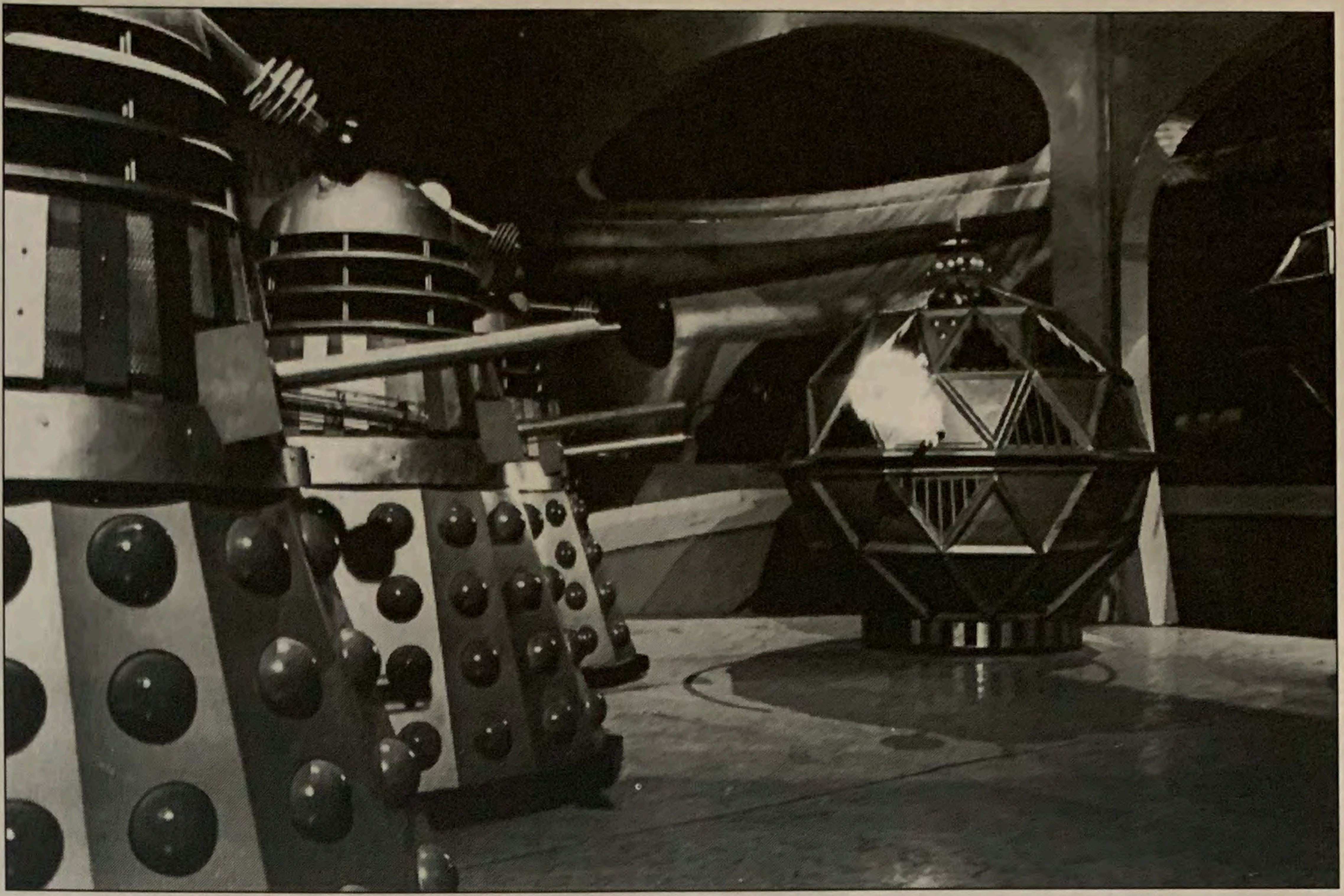


The Daleks' Master Plan (1965) ...

KM: By that time we were a team and we could do almost anything with them. I appeared on THE DICK EMERY SHOW as a Dalek and we opened fetes and Dr. Barnados homes as Daleks. We were not allowed to let it be known that we were inside the Daleks because the BBC wanted the audience to think they might have been robots to make it look as if the'd spent a lot of money on them. Then 'somebody' told the Press (one of the operators, it wasn't me!), and suddenly everybody knew about us. I had newspapers ringing me at home, and then the BBC used it as publicity.

RJ: I was a clown on the film sets in Hollywood (*The Feast of Steven*) and the Doctor was trying to find all the others. Every time he came down this passageway I'd be sitting there with a dead-pan expression on my face, and he'd say, 'Did you see so and so...do you know where they've gone...?' I'd say, 'Well, I, er...', and I'd be pointing both ways and saying, 'Well, it could be either that way or that way...I'm not quite sure which'. I was so used to doing stage work that, first off, my voice nearly blasted the pants off the sound technicians and Doug Camfield had to say, 'Stop! Don't think you're on the stage — you're in television!' It was great fun because I like comedy anyway, not that I had a lot to do, but it was great doing scenes with William Hartnell.

KM: I think, probably, we all said, 'That's it, we're not going to do another one after that', having done three months non-stop. I remember, after that particular story, I got in my car and drove right across the world, from London right through to India, then up to Katmandu and sold the car! I just wanted a change. I sent a card to Chris Barry, from some valley in Turkey made up of giant anthills of eroded earth, saying, 'Next series why don't you do it on location — it would be wonderful!' Then I drove on to Australia and I stayed for nearly ten months, just looking around to see if things were changing over here as far as films and TV were concerned, then I went back to London.


The epic climax to *The Chase* (1965)

The Power of the Daleks (1966)...

I'd been in England for ten years and I wasn't making enough money, really, even with the work I was getting with Doctor Who, so I had to decide finally whether I was going to settle there or come back to Australia. I rung the BBC to see if anything was happening and they said 'We're doing another series of Doctor Who, do you want to join us?' I said, 'Oh, I suppose so, but just one more', and that was the last one I did. I was reluctant to do it but I needed the money and one needs to work. I had made the decision that I wanted to be recognised a bit more than as a Dalek. I thought that was a good learning place and I wanted to get out into the mainstream and see what other work I could get. Actors don't like to do the same thing all the time. You ask any actor who's been in a long-running show; if it runs for more than a few months they get bored and they want to create something different.

RJ: Patrick Troughton was a beautiful character actor and great to work with, marvellous. I remember William Hartnell better because we'd worked together for three years.

When we did anything with the Daleks we always needed more Daleks than we had. In this story we created the numbers by coming out of the conveyor belt, past camera, and then chasing round the back of the camera and coming in again! Manys a time on Doctor Who we would be shuffling along, one after the other with a bit of space in between, and the first one out of camera shot would zoom madly around the back and come in again behind the others!

A photographer/journalist from *The Observer* magazine (*Jane Bawn*) visited the set on that story. Neither John (*Scott Martin*) nor I took much notice but Equity came along and said, 'You should get paid for that, they're using you while you're working on a promotional thing. You've got to get paid', so they jumped on *The Observer*'s back and we finished up getting a fee for just being photographed on the set.

The Macra Terror (1967)...

We were prepared to play anything and they asked me to play the Macra. It was very awkward but I just adapted myself. I was able to squat and my head was upwards as I had to look through the front. The legs came forward and I operated the pincer with my arms (they make them so they're awkward to work!). That's a story I don't recall a lot of.

The Evil of the Daleks (1967) ...

That was done at the big mansion in Harrow that belonged to Sir William Gilbert. It was interesting because it was set in such a different environment. They'd take shots of the Daleks at the top of the staircase looking over the banister and, of course, we couldn't get down. Sometimes there'd be one down there already, but sometimes they'd want more than the one so we'd have to get out, carry the things down the stairs, get them all set up and start the cameras again. Then we'd get to the doorway, and house doorways were never made for Daleks to go through because you'd always have the little strip that you couldn't glide over, so they'd have to stop the cameras again and move the Daleks outside. But it was a great story and we had a lovely garden to do things in.

The script never mentioned the Daleks' failings, indeed in any of the Dalek stories. They left it to the imagination of the viewer whether the Daleks could or couldn't do certain things. For example, it was never indicated in dialogue that the Daleks couldn't climb a flight of stairs. It was certainly in the minds of the more critical viewers, but oh no, the Daleks were too supreme to think they couldn't do that! The only thing they specified was in the first story — which made the Doctor get the better of the Daleks — where the static electricity had to come from the floor to power the Daleks, and by putting them on something that stopped that coming through they could be stopped. Of course they soon changed that plot device, and after that they never indicated that the Dalek couldn't do anything.

As a Dalek I enjoyed everything I did, whatever the story was, and I especially enjoyed a lot of the stories with Pat Troughton because he was such fun to work with. We used to rehearse in a church hall and one day we were taking a rest and Pat happened to be leaning on my Dalek. Suddenly he jumped onto the front of it and said, 'Go on, give us a ride!', and I gave him a ride around the rehearsal room! As it was that got incorporated into *The Evil of the Daleks* — he stood on the rim around the base of my Dalek and got between the sucker and the gun so he couldn't be shot. That was his fun, he was always doing things like that!

I vaguely remember that they were saying they would have to phase the Daleks out because they reckoned they couldn't get any more mileage out of them and they couldn't go on bringing them back, but strangely enough they're still returning years later!

I was in Patrick's last one (*The War Games, 1969*) briefly. He was such a wonderful person to work with and he made his DOCTOR WHO quite a memorable one. It was sad to think he wasn't going to do it again.

Three years later I was down in Cornwall and the BBC got in touch with me to come back and do a promo as a Dalek, so they employed me for one day. I got to the studios in Ealing and Jon Pertwee and John Scott Martin were there, and we waited and waited and waited until 5.30pm and they still hadn't shot it. They said, 'You'll have to come back tomorrow', but I had to go back to Cornwall because I'd signed the contract for one day only. I was tied up with so many other things and that was around about the time that I started to have to think about family obligations, so I didn't return for the story (*Day of the Daleks, 1972*).

I came back to my family in Australia and, since then, I've appeared in all the soapies (SKYWAYS, THE SULLIVANS, COP SHOP) and a variety of other roles, and I'm now the caretaker of a community centre here in Melborne where I stage my own plays utilising the centre's excellent theatrical facilities. I'm hoping to retire up to Queensland eventually.

KM: I could not get work as a character actor from the BBC. If I went and took my cards to the BBC tomorrow — my books, my tapes and everything showing the numerous character roles I have played — they would *still* regard me as a Dalek, so when I came back to Australia I wouldn't have DOCTOR WHO written on my credit list. I wasn't ashamed of it but I just didn't want to be stereotyped again. I didn't want to start getting parts for robots! I've been consistently working in theatre and television (DYNASTY, HOMICIDE, CHOPPER SQUAD), and I've also opened and closed a theatre - The Bondi Pavilion Theatre - on Bondi Beach.

RJ: Australian television is terrible. I rather prefer English TV and the English director's approach. They treat everybody as an equal. I can remember, when we were doing the Dalek coming out of the Thames, we were sitting on the curb of a road eating our lunches from the lunch wagon. Nothing special, just sitting on the curb, and I was sitting next to everybody else (Bill Hartnell, the make-up girl, etc.). But over here they say, 'No, that's the extras over there, and that's the stars over there', and it's a terrible attitude.

I've watched some DOCTOR WHO but not a lot. Actually, my two 21-year-olds know more about DOCTOR WHO than I do nowadays because they've seen a lot of it. I'm a little disappointed with what I have seen. Although Tom Baker had the longest period of time, he made fun of it, to put it bluntly. Now, Patrick Troughton made it humorous but he didn't send it up. Davison's a good actor, it was just so different a Doctor being young and school-typish and I don't think he settled in as much to do it as well. Colin Baker I've seen occasionally but I remember him better in other things.

DOCTOR WHO is just like *The Mousetrap* that's played in the West End for so longs. It goes on and on and there's a new era and a new lot of people watching and then their children are watching.

It was the first sci-fi programme to really hit the air-waves — LOST IN SPACE and STAR TREK all followed on. It has also been the kind of programme where writers have always been able to find something to write about. They can let their imaginations go and bring in so many different aspects, so many variations to stories, and it's all accepted because that's what DOCTOR WHO is.

KM: Without Daleks there would be no DOCTOR WHO... ❑

***The Daleks' Master Plan* (1965)**

● **Interviewed by Dallas Jones and Gary Leigh**

● **Postscript:** *At the end of 1989 I retired from the caretakership of the community centre and invested in a caravan to do a trip around Australia. The action was prompted by an invitation to make a VIP appearance at a national DOCTOR WHO convention in Perth. Katy Manning was there, and other people who I had worked with on DOCTOR WHO. When the convention was over I did a twelve-month safari ll around Australia.*

When I finished I returned to Melbourne and decided not to retire Queensland but to stay near my children. I have since done a lot of sta radio and television shows, both amateur and professional, includ operetta, musical comedies, variety, stage drama, comedies and farces, a also entertaining senior citizens' groups.

At the moment I am rehearsing a play called My Three Angels, an am hoping to direct a comedy in the near future. - ***Robert Jewe February 1994***

Kevin Manser still regularly takes off in his car to travel arou Australia during breaks in his working schedule, and is currently touri Australia in Me & My Girl.

The Dalek boys in rehearsals (left to right) Gerald Taylor, John Scott Martin, Robert Jewell, Kevin Manser and Peter Hawkins

1966 **the writers** 1967

Ian Stuart Black

"The BBC could be making sales from all that stuff they destroyed" - November 1990

"WRITERS often say that there's a passion within them which dictates that they shall become writers. I think that mine was more overwhelming than a passion, I just never thought of anything else! I had opportunities to be other things later on, like a producer and a few chances to be a director, and I never wanted to because I thought it would be a waste of time. It's bad enough being a script editor because that takes up time you could've spent writing your own stuff!

My father was what was called, in those days, an actor/manager. He had his own theatre company in the United States before the First World War which my mother was in. It was a traditional thing. Looking at it, psychologically, I decided I wasn't going to be an actor, I was going to write the words for the actors.

***The War Machines* (1966)**

In the Thirties I used to go to the cinema once a week. I loved all films from light comedy through thrillers, the Hitchcocks, the Marx Brothers, the Broadway stories, the Bing Crosby stories, everything. Films were magic.

On my demob leave I joined the Rank Organisation after my wife had shown them a play I had written while I was still in Egypt. I spent three years writing in the Scenario Department. I was just starting to make a name in the industry when television came along and I thought 'Oh God, here we go again!' But as it turned out television was absolutely ideal for me because in those days programmes were made in half-hour segments.

The first thing I did was a series called FABIAN OF SCOTLAND YARD. A group had bought the rights to this book of Fabian's, who was a real man. In fact I was told, later on, that he looked on me as the man who ruined his life because of all the things I made up - we didn't stick to the book at all!

People who have reviewed your work tend to say you have a lot of the Hitchcock script-writer in you, in everything from DANGER MAN right through DOCTOR WHO and up to STAR MAIDENS...

Don't blame me for STAR MAIDENS! I did my utmost to rescue that. They'd got themselves into a terrible jam with a premise that just didn't work. Eric (*Paice*) had worked on a series in Australia while I was setting up ELEPHANT BOY there so we'd known each other for years, and STAR MAIDENS was his idea. They called for me because Eric was under strain, but it didn't give me any pleasure - it was too nebulous and unthought out.

I was the honorary secretary of the Screenwriters' Guild (before the Writers' Guild) and Eric was a member. He and Mac Hulke, his partner, came along to see me when we were doing the DANGER MAN series and I met them and liked them. I thought that they had promise but couldn't get them past the producer of the time. They were just starting roughly the same time as Dennis Spooner and Richard Harris. Writers in those days seemed to go around in pairs so that they could comfort one another when they were getting no work!

Was it a conscious decision to specialise on series rather than one-off plays?

Yes, because if you do a series you used to do eight or nine episodes of them. Do a one-off, yes, that's very prestigious, but when you're bringing up a family it's better to do the eight than the one. When I was doing one series they used to be preparing the next, particularly when it was Lew Grade's outfit, so from about '58 to '64 it was absolutely concentrated. At times you felt like a sponge being wrung dry and then they'd ask more of you. Ugh!

I joined H. G. WELLS' INVISIBLE MAN in the summer of 1958. I actually went along to the studio at Elstree to do an episode for a series called WILLIAM TELL which was being made at the same studios. When I got there, instead of doing WILLIAM TELL the same company who were doing THE INVISIBLE MAN were in a flat

A young Deborah Watling meets THE INVISIBLE MAN (1958)

spin - this was a Tuesday and they had nothing to go on for the following Monday! They'd been having production troubles because they had an English producer and an American producer who were quarrelling like hell, and they were having difficulties with their American partners. So they said to me, 'Could you forget WILLIAM TELL and do a script on THE INVISIBLE MAN?' They took me to a little back room in the old National studios with no window, just a sky light, and I had to write this script in three or four days!

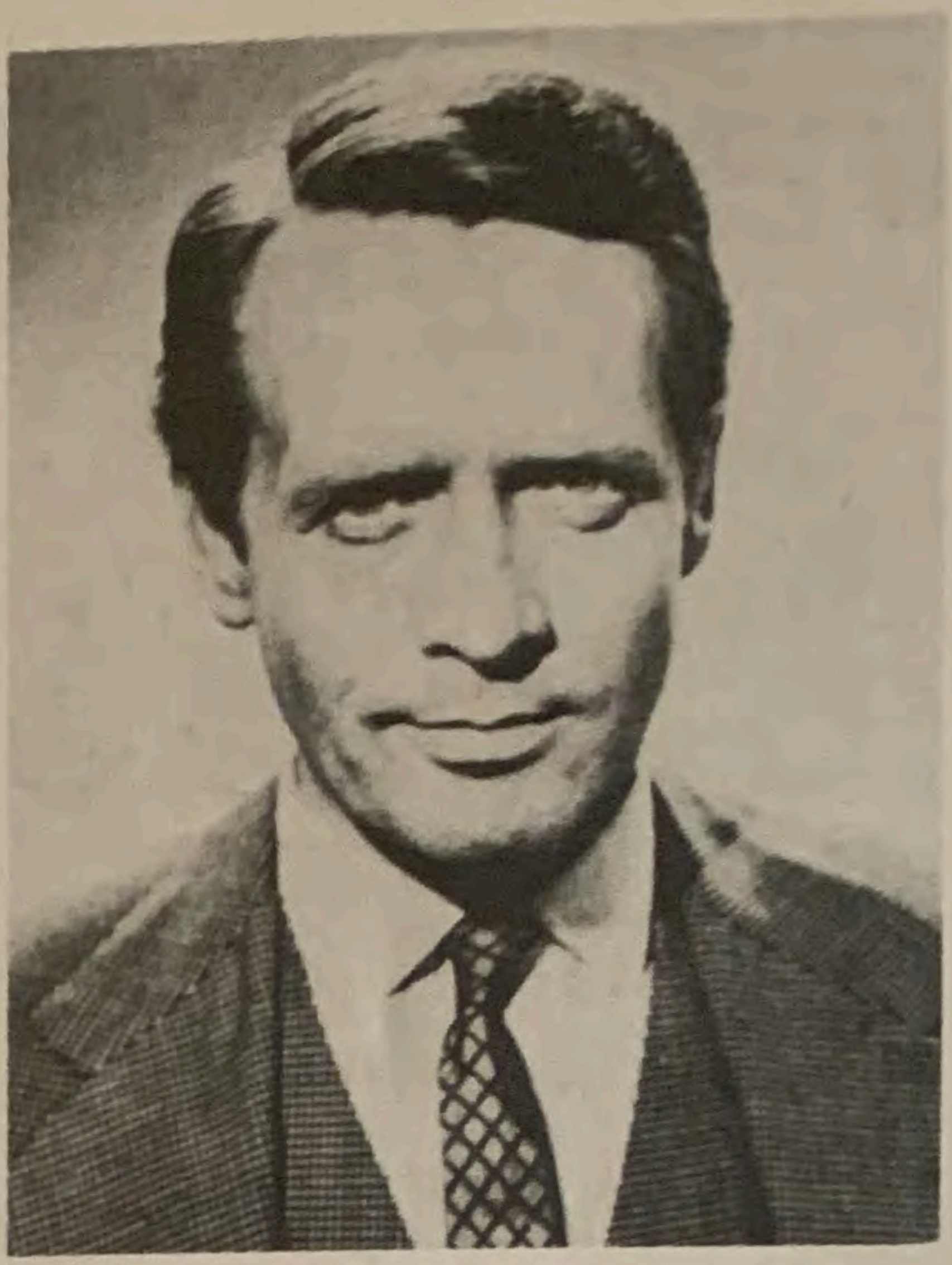
The second series of THE INVISIBLE MAN saw the phasing out of his sister and niece (played by Deborah Watling) and moved on to more espionage type of adventure. Was this a conscious move?

It was more my kind of story and I was then writing most of them at that point. They were the sort of adventure stories in which you could use the INVISIBLE MAN's ridiculous ability to go totally transparent whenever he wanted to and they fitted in very well. I found with the series that I simply wanted more excitement out of it and that meant using the Invisible Man more as an invisible man. It wasn't necessarily to get rid of the other characters, it was just that they didn't fit in with the stories quite so well.

That was the first time I was ever a story editor, which really meant I had to write as much as I could as well as managing other people. In fact I worked out on my contract a weekly payment plus extra for my scripts, so they didn't get the scripts in the weekly payment but at the same time I couldn't possibly (nor did I want to) write them all. That would have been ludicrous. I knew my work would suffer under this pressure so I got people in like Ken Taylor, who I'd worked with previously and liked as a writer, but Ken had a mind really above that level of material. He was very conscious of pacifism and social issues and I appreciated that, so instead he recommended me to someone who was working for the Danzigers' company; Brian Clemens. I got hold of Brian and he became my assistant more or less. We used to have all these wonderful discussions and work through scripts together.

What was your brief on undertaking writing for THE INVISIBLE MAN?

Lew (Grade) never said anything to me, but apparently the producer had intended it to be a comedy series. Now, I felt the potential for excitement was too good. I remember writing a story about a Polish sailor who jumped boat in London, the Communists were after him and the Invisible Man was helping him - something as simple as that! I like tension, even in comedy I'll try to bring tension in, and the company had wanted it to be light, frothy comedy. As I said, after I'd joined THE INVISIBLE MAN it became more and more at my level of what I wanted to do in popular television entertainment, and this is what led to DANGER MAN as a premise, which was mine.



Patrick McGoohan, alias DANGER MAN

Some of your storylines for THE INVISIBLE MAN appeared to have been revised for the first season of DANGER MAN. Were there any reasons for this?

After I left DANGER MAN the company probably went back and thought, 'What ideas can we revamp?', and went back to their old series to have a look at them, but this wasn't consciously done while I was there.

How did you time your scripts?

I would act the scenes to myself and visualise the drama. You got a feeling of when you're up to the quarter of an hour and there's a minute's break for commercials. It became almost a second nature.

DANGER MAN must have been a very difficult concept to sell ('We're not going to say anything about this character, except he's there...')?

Well, I didn't actually tell them that. What I did was write a[illegible]ut four pilot scripts. I remember Pat McGoohan being absol[illegible] furious about one of them, absolutely furious, because I had [illegible] lying on a bed with a girl. They were simply lying on it in ord[illegible] to open a safe which was behind the bed, nothing more, but Pat [illegible] as white-faced with anger at a meal we all had together becaus[illegible] of this apparently dishonest sexual implication. Pat was an expl[illegible] time-bomb, you were always waiting for him to go off, and [illegible]at fitted in extremely well with the concept.

Did you design these pilots with McGoohan specifically in mind?

Oh yes! I went to see Pat in *Brand* by Ibsen at the Hammers[illegible] Theatre and his performance was excellent. It's a classical and [illegible]gious play and the power of the man came through, and after t[illegible] thought that this concept of being a single driving power, [illegible] talking to people but all contained within himself, would be i[illegible]al for him.

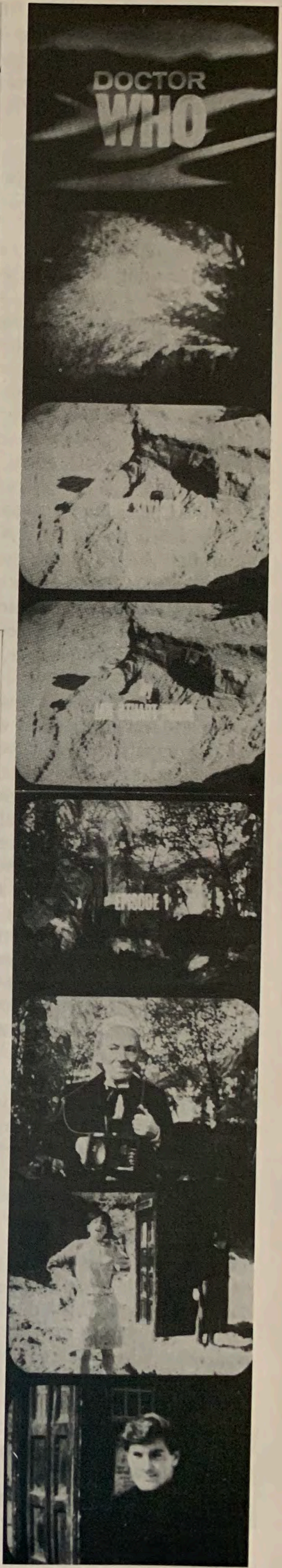
At the time was there any concept of what nationality he was going to [illegible] In the early ones it seemed to be slightly more of a New England accen[illegible]

Well, that's Pat's strange accent; it's really Northern Ireland. In fact it's not even Northern Ireland, it's something of his own (sort of catches in the back of your throat). He still does it. I noticed on COLUMBO recently he's got the same quality in his voice! I liked Pat and got on with him very well. He was a very good actor and I admired him professionally. He had certain things he didn't want to do and I respected that. He wanted very much for the DANGER MAN character to be something he could believe in. He didn't want to kill people unnecessarily and of course this made a complication to the story; wherever you've got complications and you have to surmount them you come out with a better story, so I went along with that very happily.

THE PRISONER was totally different. It was an idea of Pat's that he'd had for a long time and which he'd discussed, I think, with some friends of his, and I'd left by that time. I know that Pat used to chat at the bar occasionally about 'an idea' and it must have been THE PRISONER, but I'd gone off and was doing something different by then.

HOW did the BBC start to feature in your career?

Well, don't forget FABIAN OF SCOTLAND YARD had been bought by the BBC after the Americans made it. It was the first filmed television series of so-called 'adult' material that was shown on the BBC so they knew me and I



***The Savages*, 1966. (Right) DWB published a complete photonovel of *The Savages* in issue 101**

knew them. We were on sort of friendly terms, although I was very happy to work for commercial television because I liked the sort of drive and the professional qualities. There was an element in the BBC, I felt, of forgiving your fellows if you're all from the same school whereas I always felt it's the final product that's important.

Americans used to keep contacting me and say, 'Look, can you do an episode of this...?' One was a half-hour ghostly story (*The Tiger for ONE STEP BEYOND*) and the BBC saw it, liked it, and said, 'Would you do a thriller-type serial?' Alan Bromly was a good producer who I thought I'd like to work with, so I wrote this original six-part serial called RANSOM FOR A PRETTY GIRL, and when I was at the BBC writing it, on the door running through to the next office was written 'Doctor Who'. I asked Alan if they really were the DOCTOR WHO people and said 'I'd like to meet them', for the simple reason that my children used to watch it all the time (and children from across the road - whose parents wouldn't let them see it - used to come into our house and watch it!).

They couldn't believe I wanted to do a DOCTOR WHO, but I said, 'My kids don't think I'm a writer because I've never done DOCTOR WHO!' They asked me for an idea and I told them the idea of *The Savages (1966)* - or The White Savages as it was in those days. I liked the idea of this wonderful civilisation with some of the most artistic and valuable things of mankind and, at the same time, it was based on the dark side of man's personality which they were exploiting. It had, in a sort of superficial way, a philosophic idea. I liked a story that's not just blood and guts and chasing about but one where you're working out something. That's the reason why I probably liked it most of all, although I realise that as a DOCTOR WHO it lacked a great monster or a lot of the things that the series had, but at the same time I thought that it was something quite worthwhile trying.

I'd been watching Bill Hartnell with my kids, who I thought was a very good actor, so it was no problem at all just to slip in. I liked him, but again he could be very irritable. DOCTOR WHO picked up a lot of young, inexperienced actors and actresses and they could be a bit unprofessional, and Bill Hartnell was very professional and could get mildly irritated if they didn't know their lines properly. I could understand that, but he was a charming bloke as far as I was concerned. He wasn't all that old you know, only late fifties, but I thought he was older. I didn't know he was ill though. I just assumed that was the way he was acting.

Did you approach the office with your own ideas or did they ask you to write around their own framework?

No, I only do my own, but what I had to do with *The War Machines* was to incorporate the Post Office Tower, which had just been completed, because they thought that would be topical and interesting. Then they said, 'Can it be about computers?', but that was no problem. It's like someone coming up to you and saying, 'Can you do a story about a cowboy who's lame in his left foot?' Of course you can.

The War Machines set a precedent as the first truly contemporary setting for a DOCTOR WHO adventure.

I hadn't realised that, but when I saw some of the adventures later on I realised that they must have used this in a sense. If you want to break new ground and it works then use it, if it doesn't then discard it, and presumably they thought it worked and decided to try it again.

Apart from The War Machines - which was only discovered completely intact a few years ago - all of your DOCTOR WHO episodes are missing from the BBC.

Without being too critical, it struck me as crazy that you've got people who are supposed to be up to their job and they are junking things or cutting them out simply for the sake of getting a tape again. *The War Machines* sells all over the place and I occasionally take cash in from the United States, and that's 26 years later! The BBC could be making sales from all that stuff which they destroyed. Instead of wiping these tapes, if the BBC had sold them instead it would have been a bit more cash in their pockets.

Writers often comment that having to write for more than one companion poses problems in story structuring. Did you find this in being asked to create two new companions for The War Machines?

When I started writing for the series they told me that they wanted two new characters, and as they were going to be picked up in the London of the Sixties I knew what they'd have to be like. As far as I was concerned, Ben and Polly did not create any problems.

The Macra Terror (1967)...

I wanted to tell a story at a certain level, so it was an adventure story and exciting, while at the same time having another significance just below the surface, and very often that comes through without people putting their finger on it. They say 'That was very interesting', but they don't quite know why it was, but it's because of this second layer of significance.

They told me about Troughton and his character - this skittishness and sort of 'pixie' quality - and I thought I would play this against the very opposite; something so frightening, so appalling. So really you were taking two total contrasts - Patrick Troughton playing his pipe and being an idiot and going into danger .

The director, John Davies, cleverly added to the suspense by keeping the Macra mainly in the shadows (ref: THE DWB COMPENDIUM, page 9).

I think that the art of suggestion is a very good technique. The moment that you come out completely in the open it's not so nearly as frightening as a curtain moving slightly or something happening in the shadows. You don't show it, you let the audience create it in their own minds, their own secret fear. By doing it more slowly and suggestively, almost by implication, that's probably the best and more alarming way and a very fundamental approach to fear and to other emotions.

The original title was 'Doctor Who and the Insect Men', and then they changed into crabs and it became *The Macra Terror*. I think probably the BBC might have said, 'Could you think of an alternative to insects?' I would never interfere with directors - I believed that if you had a director who knew his job then you leave it to him. They didn't interfere with me about the scripts and I knew that they didn't mess about with them much, if at all. In somebody like Chris (*Barry*) I had total confidence, and he was very efficient in putting it on the screen as it was written.

On David Coleman's TALKBACK, concerned mothers had claimed that The Macra Terror terrified their children into virtual comas!

I'm sure it did terrify the children, and frightened the adults too! If it didn't they wouldn't have thought I could do the job properly! I mean, what is this series if it doesn't involve that sort of tension? You've got to have fear and danger and overcome that fear and danger. If you read the traditional fairy tales, they are a true struggle through danger; through *Pilgrim's Progress* you come out the other end a hero. If you live through *The Macra Terror* and get through the other side you've grown.

There is a strong element in all three of your DOCTOR WHO scripts of people losing their humanity; of having their consciousness or even their essence ripped away from them.

The individual is terribly important to me. I know that any sort of attack on the individual distresses me and, as a youngster, used to distress me very much. I think that if I'm asked for villains I probably unwittingly use them as people who destroy individuals, the inadequate, those who can't help themselves.

The Macra Terror was your last DOCTOR WHO. Were you asked to do any more after that?

There was one I wrote called 'Doctor Who and the Furies', for which I had written the basis of six episodes. I went off to the French West Indies to do a series with a French company and that took four or five months, and when I came back I moved on to something else so I never got around to finishing it. As a working writer it used to be important to me to see something ahead, so I was reluctant to go back.

Which of your two Doctors did you prefer writing for?

What was essential with DOCTOR WHO was to play it with absolute sincerity. The moment that you start codding it or being clever about it and acting as if you're just doing it for children then it's gone. It's got to be entirely sincerely approached. Admittedly it's fantasy and impossible but you must play it for real, and both these two actors took it seriously.

Would you ever consider writing for DOCTOR WHO again?

I'd love to, if it was back to the quality and the believability and significance of the Sixties, not just a shallow pantomime. You've got to go to the heart of the story and the heart of the story has got to mean something. It's got to be, as I said before, about an internal struggle, it can't just be superficial.

The next thing I did was THE MAN IN ROOM 17 for Granada, about these two men who used to solve everything from this room and never went out. I worked on THE CHAMPIONS (I only did one, for Dennis Spooner), and masses of things between 1971-76 when I did ELEPHANT BOY, CASTAWAY, TULLY, and THE OUTSIDERS, all co-productions that took me to Ceylon, and later to Australia many times.

I was offered THE SAINT by Lew Grade and I stupidly turned it down. If I hadn't turned it down I'd have made a I fortune! I am being very arrogant now, but I thought that the writing was cheap, meaningless and derivative and I didn't believe any of it.

What are you working on at the moment?

I have a supernatural book out published by Constable Books. I've also just finished a draft script for one of the television companies, which is the first TV script I've done since I moved down to Devon away from the studios, which is a very long time. I suddenly had the feeling that I'd like to be involved in television again.

Even in today's more competitive climate?

Stories are still stories. Storytelling doesn't change. The technique changes slightly, the fashion changes slightly, but the fundimentals of storytelling doesn't change." ❑

● **Interviewed by J Jeremy Bentham, Bruce Campbell and Gary Leigh**

● **Postscript:** *It's more than three years since I had this chat with G Leigh and Jeremy Bentham, and as I re-read it last week - all this t later - I kept saying to myself 'Dear, dear! I shouldn't have said th and 'I hope that's not libellous.' The whole interview appears a bit jointed to me, but I suppose when you're having a conversation - probably a few drinks - at a DOCTOR WHO convention, then it's only t expected that the style is a little jerky and sometimes pretty confused. B never mind. And I still agree with most of what I appear to have said.*

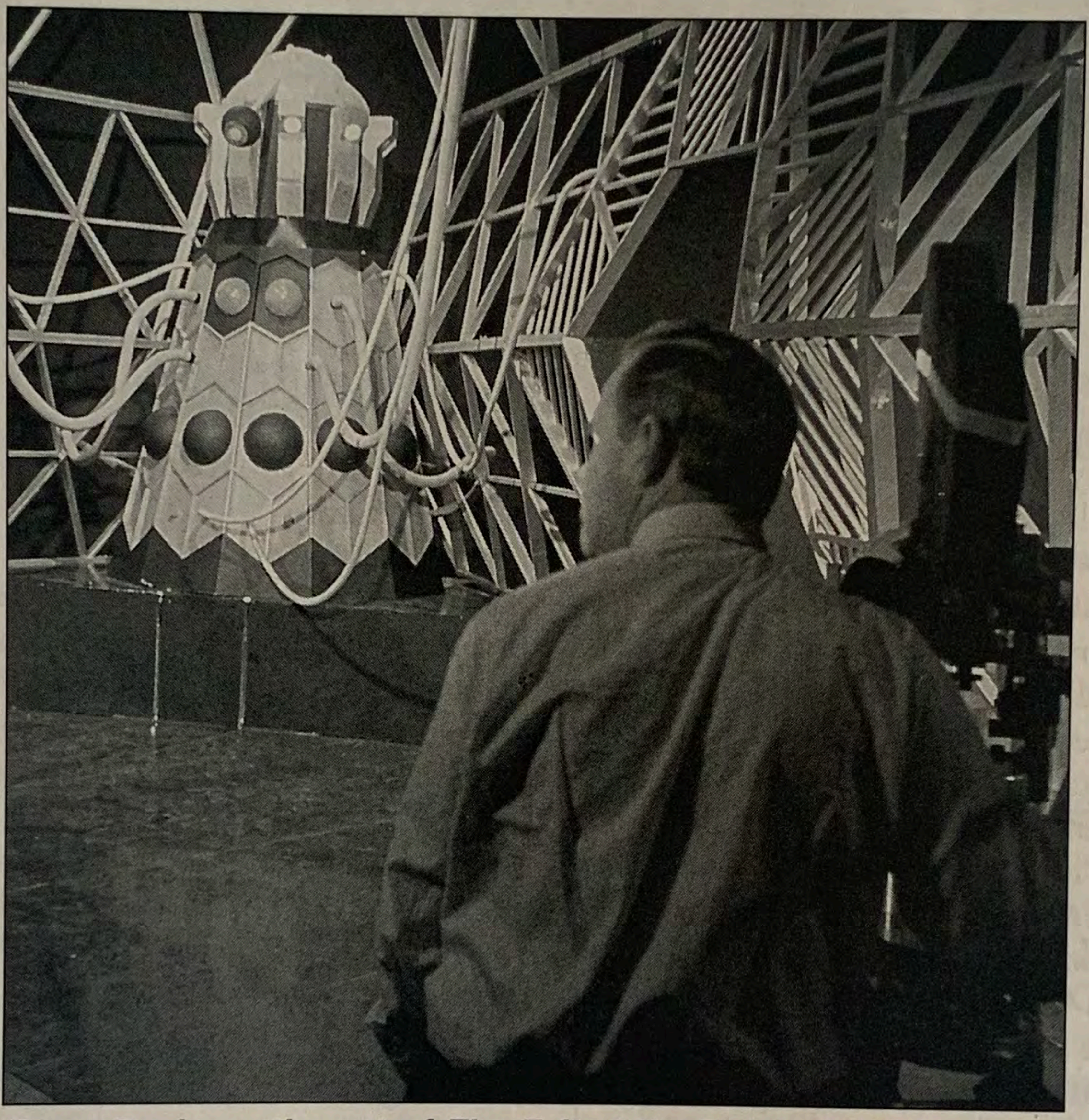
Reading through the draft of the conversation, I am again intrigued the continuing interest that so many viewers seem to have for this par ular series. After all, let's be frank, the DOCTOR WHO productions were not the most polished of television drama. They were on a fairly tight budget, and had to be shot mostly in the studio with reasonably limited casts, costumes, and to a strict schedule. The week after week pattern of work could be hard on the central characters. A great deal of imagination and ingenuity was provided by the production team, but it was not easy to deliver the polish that later dramas were to offer. Nevertheless this is the series that seems to have acquired love and loyalty more than most. I wonder why?

I see that I said in the interview that I'd like to write for DOCTOR WHO again if it ever came to life. But I doubt if it could be revived. The audience has changed; the level of violence has increased; the type of fantasy seems to me to be different. Probably DOCTOR WHO belongs very firmly in its own time...in spite of its capacity to shift in Time/Space so effortlessly. So really if it came back it would be different, and would probably disappoint. Much better to create a fresh premise, relevant to the youthful audience of today, and to attempt to engage the love and loyalty anew for another set of characters, so that in twenty, thirty years time there are conventions held by enthusiasts in the same way as today we find them honouring the admirable DOCTOR WHO. - ***Ian Stuart Black, January 1994***

1966 **the writers** 1975

Gerry Davis

"I think the Cybermen were scandalously neglected later on" - August 1988



Gerry Davis on the set of *The Evil of the Daleks* (1967)

“MY FATHER encouraged my writing. I used to read all his novels like *Food of the Gods*, *First Men on the Moon*, *The Invisible Man*, etc., so I was sort of brought up on H. G.Wells, Jules Verne, Edgar Rice Burroughs and Conan Doyle. Wells was my favourite, and at the age of sixteen - when I lived at Bexhill in Sussex - a friend and I set up a youth club in honour of H. G. Wells not long after he died, which we called The Wellsian Youth Club - Dedicated to the Ideals of H. G. Wells. We got permission from his widow to use his name and a very nice letter from his brother, Frank Wells.

I was in the Merchant Navy for four years following my first job as a reporter on a newspaper in Hastings. When I was at sea I wrote stories, and on one occasion I got a little scoop and telegraphed an article to my uncle who was a Fleet Street correspondent. It was about Errol Flynn's yacht getting into trouble in the Caribbean; everybody aboard the yacht was dead drunk and our ship had to circle it for six hours! I also became an actor and acted during the three months of annual shore leave, although I was really very much more interested in directing plays and stage-managing.

Eventually I went to live in Canada, where I found there wasn't much scope for my acting talent, and I ended up almost on the Arctic Circle in northern Canada. At the age of about twenty I was department manager in a store in a tiny mining town with a population of about five thousand, where the temperature used to drop to almost -40°! There were about one thousand fellows without women and only about five girls who were unattached. All the rest were married and the husbands used to keep an eye on their wives, so there was nothing to do in the evenings. To pass the time I listened to the radio, and I soon started writing radio plays which I began submitting to Canadian radio, which was very big in those days.

I was commissioned, at the age of 22, to write a whole series of six radio plays about the sea (because I'd just come off the ship). At that time a gentleman called Sydney Newman was working in Canadian radio and I've sort of followed him ever since. I've seen Sydney at the National Film Board in Canada in the Fifties; I worked under him when I was in the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) Script Department writing and editing scripts; I even nearly got the key job as editor of THE AVENGERS while at ABC, which I just missed out on; and then, of course, I met him again at the BBC. We've now known each other for years. He's very grand and I was like a little fly to him when I first worked at CBC where I was a stage hand in the studio.

On the strength of the six plays I got onto the National Film Board, and I was trainee there as editor and location manager. Then I wanted to get into television so I went to Toronto where I demoted myself to stage hand, because that was the only way to get in - everybody wanted to do television! I worked there for about a year before they invited me to join the Script Department, and as I said that was directly under Sydney.

I then came back to England in November 1960 due to very sad circumstances. While in Canada I'd got married to a girl from the North of England and we'd only been married for two months when we found she'd got leukaemia. It was like a death sentence. Like me she was only in her early twenties. She asked me to take her home so I quit my job at CBC and they gave me a six month leave of absence in case I wanted to come back again.

I flew her to England and put her into a hospital in Manchester and, having nothing else to do, I literally went straight down to Granada TV. I'd only landed that day, walked in, and they hired me on the spot, and the first assignment they gave me was to join Tony Warren and Harry Kershaw on the original CORONATION STREET team (at that time it was called Florizel Street)! They also gave me another programme to do called FIRST DIVIDEND, about people who win the pools, but which unfortunately never quite came to fruition. I was supposed to be an advisor on CORONATION STREET but, to be absolutely frank, I wasn't a lot of use at that point because I had lived in Canada since my late teens and so didn't really know much about the North of England. Salford was a closed book to me! I had been quite good at editing and writing American-style Canadian drama and suddenly I found myself in CORONATION STREET and 'Ee, what's up at t'Rovers?' and that

Gerry's first story as editor was *The Ark* (1966), one of several scripts he inherited from Donald Tosh

sort of thing, so I can't say I suggested anything that influenced it greatly and they didn't put my name on the screen, but I was there while they nursed it through. Did you know they were going to cut it off after four weeks because they didn't think it was doing too well? I remember that day very well.

I was only with Granada for about nine months, then my wife got a bit better. She came out of hospital with about six months to live so I left Granada to be with her. After she died I didn't want to write for a while, I wanted to do something quite different. I actually took lessons in developing a deep voice and won a scholarship to go to Italy and study opera, which was great fun and very different! I lived in Rome and Milan for eighteen months, and while there I did a little translating for Italian cinema. It was then a choice between singing and writing. I'd discovered that singing was very precarious and I was itching to write again. At the time I was right to take up singing because it took my mind off my wife's loss, and when I got back to England I was able to plunge back in.

> *"It was something like six months or so before we could get any scripts through marked as our own"*

I became a freelancer and did a script a week for the Central Office of Information and Documentary, a DOCTOR FINLAY'S CASEBOOK, and then I was asked to write a course on television script writing for international correspondence schools. I wrote this course in twelve parts and sent it off to various knowledgeable people for approval, including Donald Wilson who was at BBC Serials at that time. He took the trouble to read and even corrected it for me, and invited me in to talk about it. He then offered me a job as a script editor for the BBC.

I first worked on 199 PARK LANE, but that was ill-fated so I was really just winding it up. Then I was transferred to a show based in Birmingham for a while called UNITED, a football series, and then I asked to be transferred to DOCTOR WHO! I'm not crazy about football and I found it a bit of a chore on UNITED, although I did enjoy writing most of the initial storylines. Also I'd just got married again, my wife was pregnant and I thought it would be nice to be on a show that was based in London, and I loved DOCTOR WHO. I was always aware of and indeed fascinated by it and I thought this is what I want to work on.

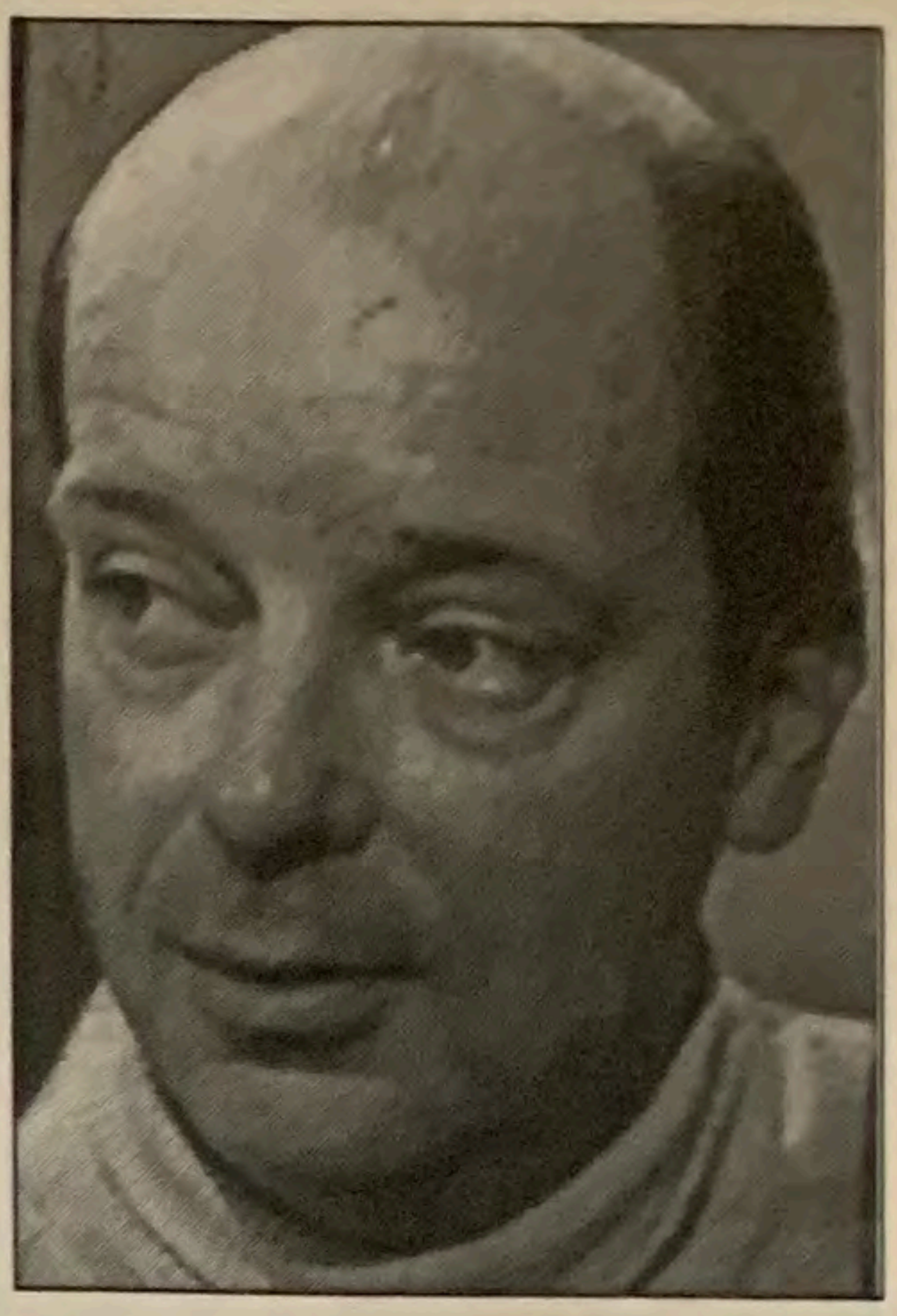
Donald Tosh and John Wiles both wanted to leave. They were a team really and they wanted to get out, and at the same time there was myself and Innes Lloyd coming in as producer. I think I actually came in a couple of weeks before Innes and I was trailing Tosh. Wiles always said afterwards he was never comfortable on the show. I think he just wanted more freedom to freelance and write. I don't think producing was his bag - he was really more of a writer.

When I came in, in 1966, there had already been three years of the programme. I couldn't read all the scripts that had gone before, so the first thing I did was to dig out of the files all the stills that were representative of the setting and the characters from every episode, from the very first one right the way through. It was specifically so that when a writer came to the office, the whole wall behind my desk would have all these photographs with little captions, so at a glance any writer would know what had gone before and what to avoid, and at the same time I would give him an idea for something. It was very helpful for me because when I was doing nothing I could just memorise all the different adventures and get a hold of it. When I went back to do *Revenge of the Cybermen (1975)*, and years later to see Eric Saward, I was gratified to see it was still there, updated! Meanwhile in his office Innes kept charts of how the viewing figures were going so we knew at a glance every week whether we were up or down and when we had to watch out.

It was something like six months or so before we could get any scripts through marked as our own (i.e: Innes Lloyd's and myself's ideas for the programme). For that reason we didn't worry about the low ratings at that time because we hadn't had a chance to do one of our own scripts until *The Tenth Planet.* I suppose *The Smugglers* was ours in a way, but I think Hayles had already been commissioned to do a historical one. Otherwise there was no chance at all in the beginning to put our imprint on. You have to line up scripts long enough so that whoever it is is taking over will probably have several months before he can put his own imprint onto the programme. So we had to use up the scripts that had already been assembled and they were pretty bad. Some of them were very much the sort of jokey, historical type stuff that was not going down very well, for example *The Gunfighters* which I had nothing to do with, and *The Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve* which I also came in on. The futuristic *The Ark* I actually liked very much, and *The Celestial Toymaker* I basically had to rewrite from scratch.

The Celestial Toymaker (*1966*) was conceived by Donald Tosh and written by Brian Hayles - a very nice man who I'd worked with on UNITED - as a sort of an in-joke about the then Head of Drama Gerald Savory. His great success had been a show called *George and Margaret*, which ran for three or four years in the West End before the war (his whole career was founded on *George and Margaret*). What Tosh thought he'd do was to have a DOCTOR WHO story with these two characters, but the gimmick of *George and Margaret* is that they never appear in the play; they're expected at this country house and everybody's in a tizzy about their arrival, and at the end they open the door and say 'Ah, George and Margaret', the curtain comes down and you never see them! That's the gag, so Donald Tosh thought he would bring on George and Margaret. It was a bit self-indulgent, really, and not a good idea, but what happened was he got Hayles to write it after Savory had given permission to use the characters, but at the last minute Savory read the scripts - about one week before we were ready to go into rehearsal - and suddenly said 'Absolutely *no*, I don't want my characters to go on like this as just rubbish!'

At that time *The Gunfighters* was being written by Donald Cotton, *The Savages* was there and I forget what else, but there was nothing in at that moment of time that was ready to put in its place. I'd just come on to the scene and hadn't yet commissioned



The Moonbase (1967). (Right) Cyber co-creator Kit Pedler (July 1968)

anything. Hayles was tied up and couldn't rewrite it himself, but Savory wanted me to write it anyway because he knew my work. I literally had to do it in four days; an episode a day! I chucked out the characters of George and Margaret and turned them into clowns.

Hayles bore me no ill will; he came around afterwards and said it was alright, and there was also *The Smugglers* at that time which he wrote and we did a lot of work together on that. It worked very well because he had a great gift for period dialogue, which was quite fascinating. He was able to script a way of talking that did recreate the 17th century conventions and yet wasn't cumbersome. There was nothing imposed on us to keep the historical stories, but it was part of Doctor Who from the start. My contention was that if he goes back in time he shouldn't go to periods that the majority of people are not too familiar with, like the Massacre of St. Bartholomew which was grim. I thought they should be romantic subjects, that's why the last two historical ones were different in feel to the others.

They no longer exist, and I think it's just appalling. Some of the best Doomwatchs, Softly, Softlys and First Ladys I worked on have gone. Now of course the BBC could group them and sell them in little packages and make a lot of money. The only reason they were scrubbed was just to use the bloody tapes again!

INNES Lloyd decided that we should have a scientific advisor. I met with a number of scientists at that time - Alex Comfort, Professor Laithwaite from the Imperial College, I even met with Patrick Moore - and Kit Pedler was the one who really seemed to fit the bill. I tried out a little fiction with them to see if they were flexible; if, instead of just saying 'No, it can't happen' they say 'Well, it doesn't happen this way but there's another way it could happen', that was what I wanted; someone who would be adaptable so I could say to writers if they were stuck, 'Well, phone up the scientific advisor and he will help you'.

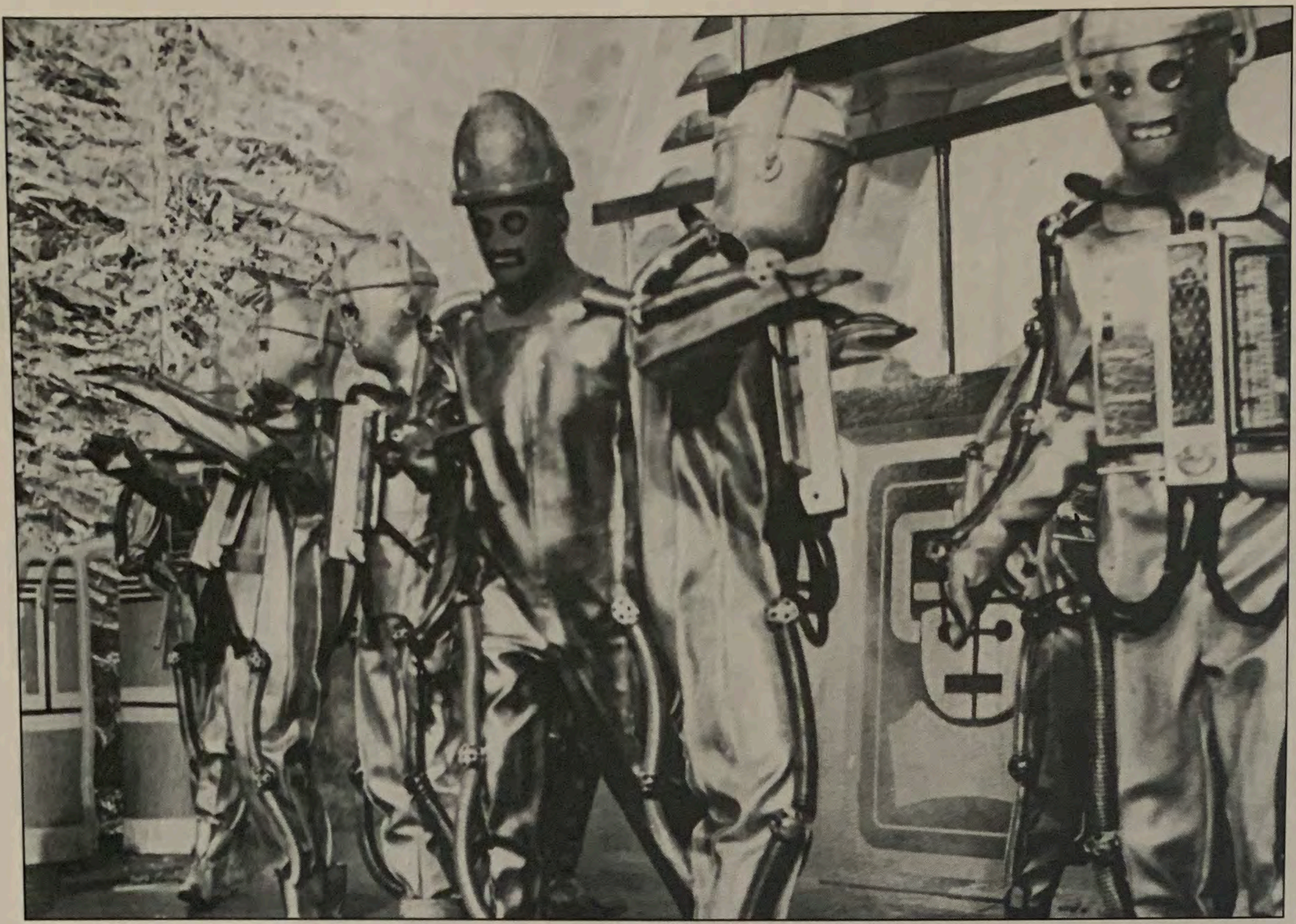
Kit Pedler was flexible and he could write, not dramatically but very movingly and very well about science, and that's where we were sort of able to come together; he didn't really interfere with my dramatic side and I didn't interfere with his scientific side. We both respected each others' abilities whereas, if you get two writers together, they've both got different ideas on drama and characters and you sometimes get a conflict going on (and the same thing happens if you get two scientists together).

I'd never been an afficianado of main-stream sci-fi like Kit, who used to love it and read it all the time. My reading was more generalised, and when we worked together I used to try and get him off the familiar themes and back to what were basics. I would say, 'Okay, tell me something exciting that's happening in science', (like the thinning of the ozone layer). I would then take it from there and say 'Well, what could happen about this in time?', and build up the stories rather than saying 'Let's do a transmutation of matter story' or another familiar sci-fi cliché.

Innes and I thought we'd start Kit off by giving him a story to do. We were sitting in the office one day and looked out and saw the Post Office Tower. I said to Kit, 'What would happen if...', and somehow some magic happened and we suddenly found our minds moving together. I then said, 'Could something dominate the city from there because it's the tallest structure in London?' He said, 'It would have to be a computer', and I replied, 'Ah, that's interesting, but how would it get around?'...and eventually we thought about telephones and pillar boxes, and we'd have all the kids so scared they wouldn't post a letter or pick up the telephone. Then we thought, because a computer is stationary, it would have to impose its power upon people to get them to make war machines, which would then go out onto the streets and be capable of dominating the city. That's how the computer would take over. All that came in one meeting and it was turned over to Ian Stuart Black who wrote the script.

Then Kit wanted to do his own script so we asked him to come up with some ideas, one of which was something rather like *The Tenth Planet*, but the characters he used were sort of star monks (I forget exactly, but rather like the Medieval Monk we'd already had). By that time we had a real rapport and we could strike sparks off each other, and I said, 'Look Kit, forget sci-fi, forget everything you've read. What do you feel about medicine?' I soon found he was afraid that medicine would become a matter of machines; that you'd hook people up to computers and they would be the doctors and nurses. We wrote a Doomwatch later about cybernetics called *The Iron Doctor*, about a computer which actually makes a decision to terminate certain people after summing up their cases and deciding there was no sense in wasting the time and money. It was like an electronic Margaret Thatcher!

Kit originally came up with that idea for Doctor Who, then I said, 'Well, suppose people got totally cybernetic, where they lose their souls, what would happen...?', and that's how the Cybermen were born between the two of us. After writing a few pages of *The*



***The Tomb of the Cybermen*, 1967**

Tenth Planet, Kit said, 'Look, I don't feel too confident about this, would you like to form a partnership?' I said, 'It's a bit tricky because I'm employed by the BBC, but we'll see if we can do it', and we formed a sci-fi writing partnership. *The Tenth Planet* was the first thing we did.

We were looking for a new recurring monster because, at that point, we couldn't use the Daleks. Terry Nation was able to keep them off for a while, and that was one of the toughest things Innes and I came in on; we couldn't use the most popular monster to that date! Everybody was buying Dalek souvenirs in the shops and we couldn't use them on TV! What Terry Nation wanted to do was to make a whole series of films using the Daleks. Two films were made with Peter Cushing but they just weren't very successful, and once he'd realised that I think he gave permission for us to use them again. But when Innes and I started on DOCTOR WHO there were no Daleks, we didn't want anymore historical ones and so the time was right for a new monster. When we came up with the Cybermen I think we were both pretty excited about it, so much so that we did *Tenth Planet*, *Moonbase* and *Tomb of the Cybermen* in one year!

Unfortunately I wasn't allowed to take joint credit for every episode of *The Tenth Planet* because I was under contract as a script editor and bound by BBC policy (by the time *The Tomb of the Cybermen* came on I had left the programme so I was allowed to be credited for it). At that time my contract said I could write six hours of TV a year. I'd already done a lot of UNITED that year, and at that particular time I remember I wasn't allowed, 'officially', to write anymore. 'Unofficially', I wrote the first draft of *The Tenth Planet*, Kit wrote the next draft, then we wrote it together and Kit split the money and the copyright with me. The copyright of the Cybermen went to our partnership so I was protected and got the money and the copyright, but I didn't get the credit and, to this day, it's made a lot of confusion about who created the Cybermen. I can tell you categorically Pat Dunlop did *not* write anything for *The Tenth Planet*! I recently looked at the original script again. There's something about a writer that, when you open one page of dialogue, you know whether you've written it or not, and I knew right away that nobody else wrote any of it.

> *"When we came up with the Cybermen I think we were both pretty excited about it, so much so that we did Tenth Planet, Moonbase and Tomb of the Cybermen in one year!"*

This was basically how Kit and I worked; I would think of a story and write a first draft, then Kit would go through it and put all of the science into it, then I'd get it back and we'd finally sit down together and complete it. It was a joint effort but I was the one who put the structure down because Kit's strong point was the authenticity and ideas of the scientific elements.

By the time *The Tomb of the Cybermen* (*1967*) came around we wanted to get away from the pattern of Cybermen coming and being beaten back and then getting inside, that sort of thing. Also we thought it would be interesting to see something of where the Cybermen came from. Kit used to like stuff about silos and rockets and I was always writing things about claustrophobic tunnels.

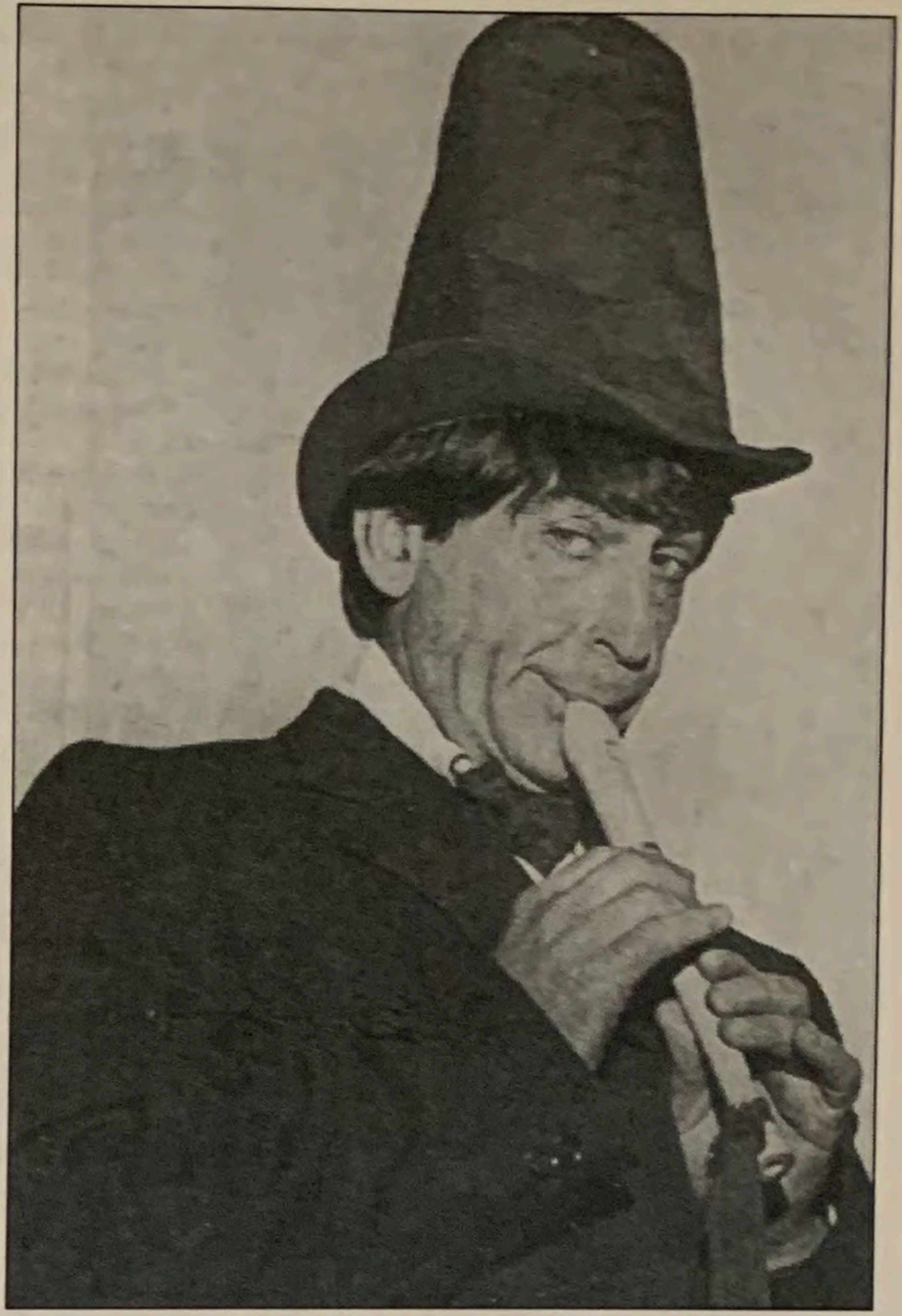
Once, as a little kid on a school outing, we went down a coalmine and I had to crawl along a narrow crevice. I was aware that above me was a thousand feet of solid earth. I was just walking along and it suddenly narrowed down to just three feet and there was no way out. I stopped and started shivering, shuddering and sweating as I thought of all the weight of roc above my head. I don't know how but I eventually got out th other end and I thought 'Never again!' Since then I must hav written quite a few things with that sort of tunnel image in min because when you write you try to make your fears and phobi work for you, just like Kit's phobia with cybernetics taking over.

There was something very evocative about the image of th Cybermen being all frozen up and gradually coming to life an breaking through their honeycomb-like membranes. And of cours we created the little Cybermats. We thought the Cybermen woul have some sort of ancillary animal thing, and we basically wante something rather horrific that would crawl along and then leap o you, clamp to the side of your face and home-in on your brai waves. We originally envisaged them like silver fish, with that sor of segmented body, and thought it would be interesting to have th scene where they were all sitting down unawares and then suddenly this thing starts coming... We all thought they might b marketed as a children's toy but it didn't quite catch on.

I liked the second generation Cybermen (*Moonbase* and *Tomb* better than the first ones, which I thought looked too much like people. Once they became masks that was closer to what we conceived as a Cyberman. I think there's a danger of them getting too fussy nowadays. There's too much detail and I don't like the dog face which, to me, is a copy of the *Star Wars* stormtroopers, and I hope they get out of that. My favourite was the impassive mask used in *Invasion* (*1968*). Kit and I did a lot of designing initially when we were discussing what they would look like and Kit's sketch did have a chest unit and some of the things that were eventually used. Then successive designers pick them up and do things with them which is okay because, like human beings change their style of clothes through the years, it's logical the Cybermen will change.

Innes Lloyd didn't really interfere very much with the script side. I mean, he gave a general idea of what he wanted but he left it to me and I didn't interfere with his casting. For example I think Jackie Lane who played Dodo was basically an older actress trying to come across as a younger person. Every producer who's ever come on to DOCTOR WHO has brought in their own people and he

William Hartnell visits a children's ward in 1966 towards the end of his time as the first Doctor



The cosmic hobo, Patrick Troughton

wanted fresh blood. Ben and Polly were recruited by Innes and were his creations.

I liked old Hartnell and I got on very well with him, so well in fact that I literally used to have to go down to the studio whenever the director or whoever got in a tizz with him because they felt I could handle him. Quite honestly the only thing wrong with him was he was a bit testy. Occasionally he'd cause a bit of a storm about something, for example there was an incident with a chair where he said 'I can't sit in *that* chair! I refuse to have anything to do with that chair!' So I went down to the studio floor and the crew would be saying, 'For God's sake, talk to him, he's getting bad tempered, stamping up and down...'

'Bill, what's the trouble?' I would say.

'Look at this! Look at this! I'm supposed to do this scene. How can I sit in this? How can I possibly...!'

'My God, quite right, we'll get rid of it...Wait a minute, doesn't it look a bit like that chair John Barrymore played Hamlet in?'

'Well, I...I...well, yes, I suppose it does actually, it's a Hamlet chair isn't it?'

'Yes, it's a Hamlet chair. Didn't he copy it from Irving?'

'By jove, you're right, I never thought of that. Absolutely, it's a Hamlet chair!'

'Well listen, Bill, we'd better get on with rehearsals now so I'll get the chair carried out', and he snapped 'Oh no, no, no, no, no, kindly *leave* it!' I knew my theatre history, you see. For example, my favourite film actor is still Robert Donat, a wonderful actor (*The Young Mr Pip*, etc.), and he and William Hartnell were great friends together in rep. As soon as I said, 'Oh, my favourite actor's Robert Donat', he immediately warmed to me! That man had been with so many famous people, and it didn't matter what the subject was but we would spend hours and hours and hours chatting and I'd be fascinated, and of course most of the people around us weren't too interested in that sort of conversation. I was a bit of a pet of his, I think!

He wasn't a well man, which caused a problem in that the show might have ended. The ratings were low, and although the Cybermen built them up a little it was a dangerous time. There was a real danger that the programme could have been axed, because a series doesn't usually survive the main character leaving.

I think it was a conglomerate decision to rejuvenate the Doctor, we all had a go. I even remember Dennis Spooner coming in at one point and having a look to see if he could think of something.

TROUGHTON was cast, and then we had a big meeting to try and decide what kind of character he would be. Sydney Newman wanted a cosmic hobo-type character, but that didn't tell us a lot. While they were all discussing I remember saying, 'Look, please lets talk it over with Troughton because he's getting confused with everybody saying different and contradictory things'. He was a charming man but you could never pin him down to anything. You could ask him, 'Is it going to rain today?', and he'd say, 'Well yes, could rain, yes, yes, shouldn't be surprised'. Then you'd say, 'Well, there's some blue sky there', and he'd say, 'Yes, well it could be a fine day too'! There was that quality about him, and I thought if we could get that it would be such a nice change. I didn't want a character that was just going to imitate Hartnell, because then everybody would be making comparisons.

I based his Doctor on James Stewart's character from *Destry Rides Again* - a guy who talks in parables, who never comes out directly. People would say, 'What the hell's he on about?', and finally they get the message. I thought it would be very interesting if, after having an authoritarian like Hartnell clapping his hands and saying, 'Ch...ch...ch...child!', we could have somebody who spoke in a roundabout way so the companions would have to think for themselves (because with Hartnell they were just like little kids, sheep, towards the end). I thought it would be much more fun if we had a dangerous situation and a Doctor who just sat down and played his pipe. The companions would be screaming, 'My God, the water's coming up, what are we going to do!' and he continues playing and says, 'Well I don't know, something will turn up'.

We managed to keep it up for a while, certainly in *The Highlanders* and *The Moonbase* where he went around collecting boots, but it was too hard to keep it going. Patrick could play it so well that nobody would know what he's at. He was almost like, at times, a half-witted child and a very illusive character.

Nation then gave permission to use the Daleks again but didn't want to write any more scripts. We used David Whitaker as he had edited his scripts at the beginning. David was the chairman of the

Michael Elwyn as Ffinch (*The Highlanders*, 1966)

Writer's Guild and I was the head of one of the departments there so he was a friend of mine and a charming, lovely man. It was a great pleasure working with him.

Then we commissioned Elwyn Jones, a very lustrious and striking man who should have run the BBC (even David Rose was in awe of him!), to do *The Highlanders* (*1966/7*). He wanted to write a historical story so I suggested Culloden, and he seemed to like the idea of a romantic story. A little time passed as I waited for the script, and one day I was called into the boss's office (Shaun Sutton at that time). Elwyn Jones was there and Shaun said, 'Would you mind writing it for Elwyn?' Without any help from Elwyn I just wrote the whole thing! It was all my creation but I shared the credit with him, and Elwyn's little contribution to it was a brief letter which said 'Dear Gerry, read the scripts, how very clever you are, love Elwyn'! I didn't mind because, again, it gave me a chance to do a bit more writing which I enjoyed, and also I made a bit more money too! It was a joint decision to drop the historicals at that point because the futuristic ones did so much better. There was really no point in doing any more.

Innes Lloyd cast Frazer Hines and should have some credit for picking an actor who was attractive for that character. It was great fun creating him because most of the companions previously had come from the present day. I thought it would be interesting if you got somebody from a couple of centuries back who would have a different attitude towards what was going on - who believed in witches and so on - so certain things he would take for granted.

> *"I only wish to God that I had had somebody to keep a close eye on the Cybermen the same way Nation did with the Daleks. I think they were scandalously neglected later on, they really were"*

It was always a problem when we had too many people around, but the three companions we had were totally dissimilar: Ben was a sort of very pragmatic, down-to-earth cockney but very respectful at the same time; Jamie was much more of a rebel - he'd always be suspicious of what was going on and wouldn't accept things, for example in *The Moonbase* where he couldn't accept he was on the Moon because 'The Moon's up in the sky'; and Polly was the girl with very long legs running around with very short skirts on looking glamorous, so you had that difference between them. Anneke Wills was a little bit temperemental, but she was alright. I think Innes wanted somebody a bit younger and more child-like - she was a bit too sexy to be honest! I mean, you wondered why Ben or Jamie wasn't dragging her off into the bedroom!

I did try to use new blood on DOCTOR WHO, but it's a tough thing to write for. For example, I remember *The Underwater Menace* by dear old Geoffrey Orme very well because I did a lot of the work on that show. We really didn't have time to bring new writers in and adapt them to the specific formula of 24-minute episodes with clilfhangers, etc. You couldn't really give an unestablished writer four episodes of DOCTOR WHO because if they fall down what are you going to do? I tried to use a mix between old and new, but established, writers. In fact I gave my first commission to Roy (LAST OF THE SUMMER WINE) Clarke. There were one or two other writers who were sort of partially commissioned at the time to do storylines but they didn't come into anything solid. You did try new writers by giving them storyline commissions, and if they came up with a good storyline then you might go ahead and do the script.

Malcolm Hulke was another old friend of mine and a great ideas man. I thought *The Faceless Ones* worked out very well. There was quite a bit of work done on it (I remember long sessions in the office with David Ellis). Again I worked very closely with David Whitaker on *The Evil of the Daleks*. It was terrific to get Marius Goring as Maxtible. Innes Lloyd was a genius at casting. He knew how to pursue and get exotic people and big time actors like Michael Gough and Marius Goring which gave a big prestige to the programme. Deborah Watling was a little teenager at the time, a sweetheart, and I liked her very much.

I did all the script-editing for *The Evil of the Daleks* as Peter Bryant was just coming in and learning the ropes. To be quite frank I didn't feel he was a writer or suited to script-editing when they gave me him as an assistant. He was better suited to producing, and that's why, when Innes wanted me to take over from him as producer and I turned it down, I told him to use Peter. He was also an actor and he knew and circulated with all the acting fraternity much better than I did, so I recommended him. He only script-edited a couple of stories before becoming producer.

It's hard to explain but, at that time, producing was not something a lot of people like directors or even production assistants wanted to do. Some of the editors did but I was actually making a bit more money by script-editing and writing scripts as well. Also writing was what I was trained for and I didn't particularly want to have all the cares and worries of the programme on my shoulder. The producers I worked with, like Innes Lloyd, Morris Barry and Bernard Hepton, were always very good to me. I had freedom to commission and do whatever I wanted with the script, so why bother producing? If I'd been producer I'd have selected the directors, the actors, I'd have had a lot more say about the scenery and the sets and I'd also have had to administer the money, but I wouldn't have had time to write or supervise the scripts! I felt my talent has always been as a writer.

I felt that either I became producer of DOCTOR WHO or I got out of it, and in hindsight I think I did the right thing because, to me, the act of writing was the toughest part. If you get the writing right you're three quarters of the way there in dramatic terms. I'm not saying the other things aren't important, of course they are, but if you don't start out with a good script then you just haven't got a series. I then left Threshold House and made the transition from Series to Serials on FIRST LADY with David Rose, which was very exciting for me. I used to meet up with Kit Pedler, who continued developing ideas for stories like *The Wheel in Space* and *Invasion*, and then DOOMWATCH started taking form which David Rose helped to push through.

Years later, I can't remember whether it was in Barry Letts or Philip Hinchcliffe's time, I came up and discussed with Robert Holmes a new Cyberman story. At that time they were particularly short of money so I wanted to write a show around one set, as I had done with *The Moonbase* and *The Tenth Planet*. I wrote it as part of the Nerva saga, using the ship as a sort of floating Vegas - a gambling casino in space - rather like later in STAR WARS where they had that galactic bar with all these funny monsters. When the Doctor arrived there was no sign of anybody, yet there were these strange footprints and things watching them. I wanted to build up that mysterious sort of atmosphere. Then I think what happened was they suddenly had a lot of extra money and were able to add the Vogan stuff, and I only played a small part in that. It's very hard to say whether it would have worked better. I've still got the original script somewhere.*

I only wish to God that I had had somebody to keep a close eye on the Cybermen the same way Nation did with the Daleks. I think they were scandalously neglected later on, they really were. I'm talking about the more recent Eighties ones, really. Some of it's been good - it's been up and down like anything else - but in *The Five Doctors* they were being shot down like nine pins, which was *not* my concept of Cybermen at all. I felt they were being abused and, frankly, I wasn't too pleased. I was in America, Kit died, and there was nobody really except the agent to protect us. Roger Hancock was more conscientious of keeping a tab of what was going on. I was six thousand miles away and I think my agent just used to automatically approve anything that came through. He didn't think it was necessary to send me scripts and so on.

By the time I found out about these things I did then let the team know that I wanted to do another story some time, but it never came to anything at all. I sent a rough sort of storyline expecting that they'd say 'Well no, fifteen years later the programme's changed a lot'. Then you'd expect to be brought in by either Nathan-Turner or Saward and told, 'Okay, Gerry, thanks for writing this but this is not what we want now because what we're doing is different. But that's fine because you're a professional so you can adapt to that'. But that never happened and I don't know why, but I would like to have done another one. I've had one in mind for a long time which is a genesis of the Cybermen story and I'd love to do it, but every time I turn around to go back to America I find Nathan-Turner's commissioned another Cyberscript and I'm not even invited to do it! It wasn't very pleasant to be snubbed like that.

"Every time I turn around to go back to America I find Nathan-Turner's commissioned another Cyberscript and I'm not even invited to do it! It wasn't very pleasant to be snubbed like that"

I've also kept my hand in sci-fi while in America; I've done CAPTAIN POWER and the film *The Final Countdown* with Kirk Douglas, and it had a lot of the elements of DOCTOR WHO like a ship that goes through time. Also I worked on THE BIONIC WOMAN for a year and a half with dear Lindsey Wagner, who's a great friend.

Through the years I've always watched DOCTOR WHO whenever I could, on PBS in the States. These days they've built up a bit too much of a Bible. It must be difficult at times to keep it all in mind, Time Lords, Gallifrey and the rest of it. It does mean the Doctor is not quite as free as he was in my day when there was no background. You could put him anywhere, do anything with him. Now they've got to keep faith with what's gone before so it may have become a bit cumbersome, but that said I still think it's the most wonderfully open-ended show. You could start tomorrow and go in another direction entirely.

The novelisations are great fun. I use the scripts of course, but I also try to remember some of the bits I had to leave out of the scripts because they were too much at the time and put them back in the novels. My favourites are *The Tomb of the Cybermen* and *The Highlanders*, which I was able to get some humour into. I found, with Troughton's character, that you could put a lot of jokes, games and surprises in and still maintain the suspense. That's why I also liked the one about *The Celestial Toymaker*, which myself and Alison Bingeman split between us. I went back over the original and we talked about it quite a bit and Alison really built up a lot of the atmosphere. It was interesting because we only had one episode to see so she had to use a lot of her imagination. For the *Cybermen* book they asked me to comment on certain things and they published my original 'Genesis of the Cybermen' story.

I'd love to write a stage play. At one time Kit Pedler and I were going to write the first sci-fi play in the West End, but we didn't get very far because we were both very busy, and I could see there was going to be a lot of work for me because Kit wasn't a fan of the stage. I've always followed the theatre and it really takes a lot of your time. I'd like to pick it up some time. It was about a rogue computer and it had a very unusual setting..." ❑

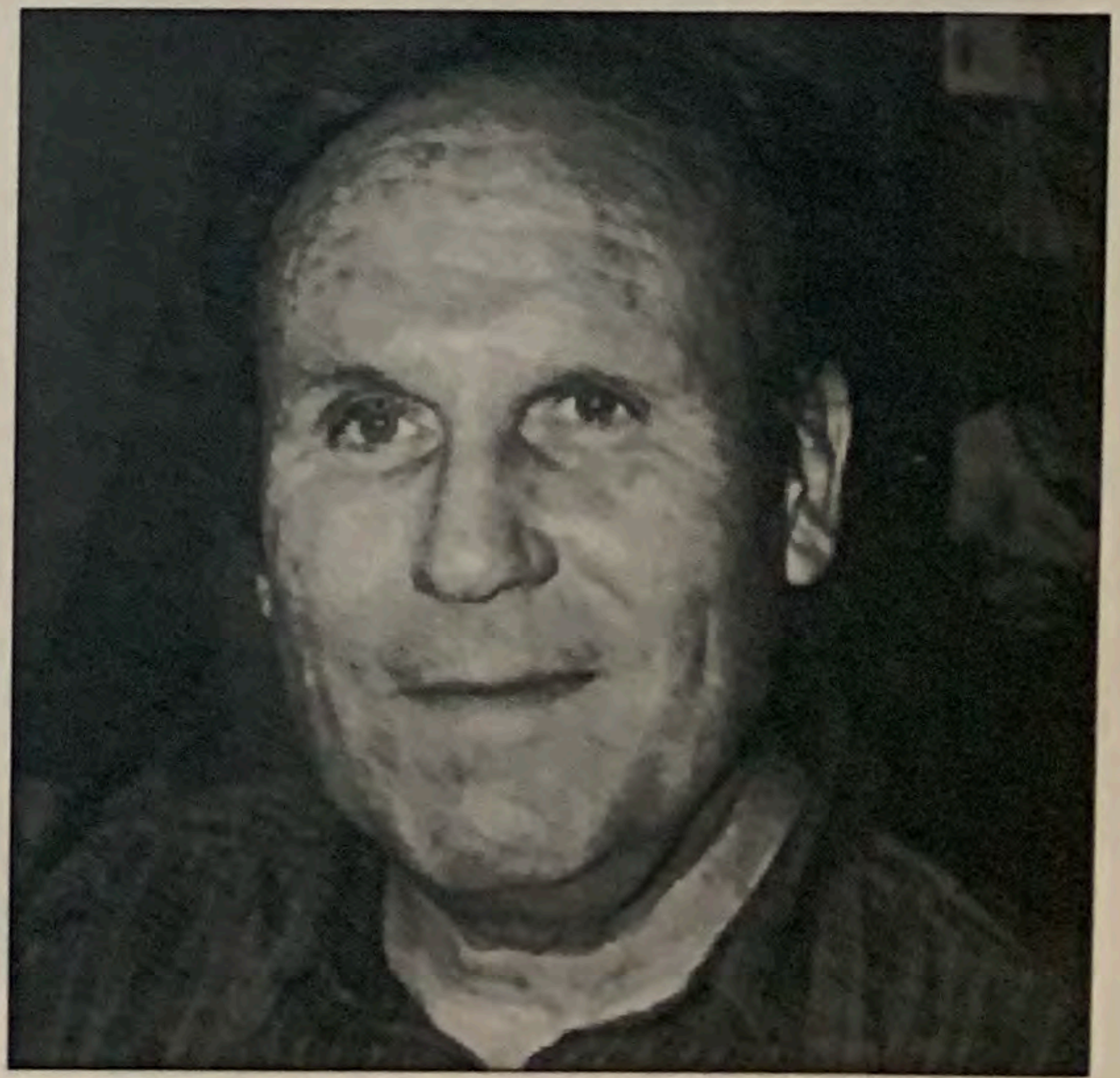
● **Interviewed by Gary Leigh**

IN 1991 Gerry Davis allowed DWB to publish his original script - Return of the Cybermen - which appears in* ***The DWB Compendium.*

● **Postscript:** *Gerry Davis spent the last years of his life splitting his time between writing and teaching script construction at his usually over-subscribed courses at UCLA's prestigious film school. His main love continued to be writing, and he was working on a variety of projects right up to his untimely death in August 1991 - just eight days after the passing of his former producer, Innes Lloyd. These included a film script about a post-Holocaust world where only one political elite have access to vital resources; a thriller about Hitler's interest in the occult; and a romance based on Nordic mythology. TV projects included a police series set in London's West End; a revived* DOOMWATCH; *and a series about the turn of the century native Canadian conservasionist, Grey Owl.*

It was this last project that proved to be closest to his heart, as it was the books of Grey Owl that initially inspired the young Davis to writing. What drew him back to his early influence was not just the conservation aspect - Grey Owl, through his lobbying, saved the Candian beaver from extinction and got it made a national emblem for his country - but it was also the mystery that surrounded the man's life. In reality, the native Canadian was nothing of the sort; he was in fact born in Hastings on London's south coast and turned his childhood love of Indian stories into reality by dying his hair black, learning the language and adopting the way of life so successfully that even his Indian wife never knew the truth while he was alive. Gerry wanted to tell the story of mystery, history, romance and evironmental concern that Grey Owl represented, but sadly the project was never to make it beyond pre-production.

However, despite the unfulfilled promise of the projects curtailed by Gerry's death, he left a substantial and lasting legacy with his contributions to DOCTOR WHO. *As if creating the Cybermen wasn't enough, he also formulated Patrick Troughton's Doctor. Few others can claim to have made such valuable contributions to the show's chronicles, or done so with such enthusiasm. -* ***Anthony Clark, February 1994***

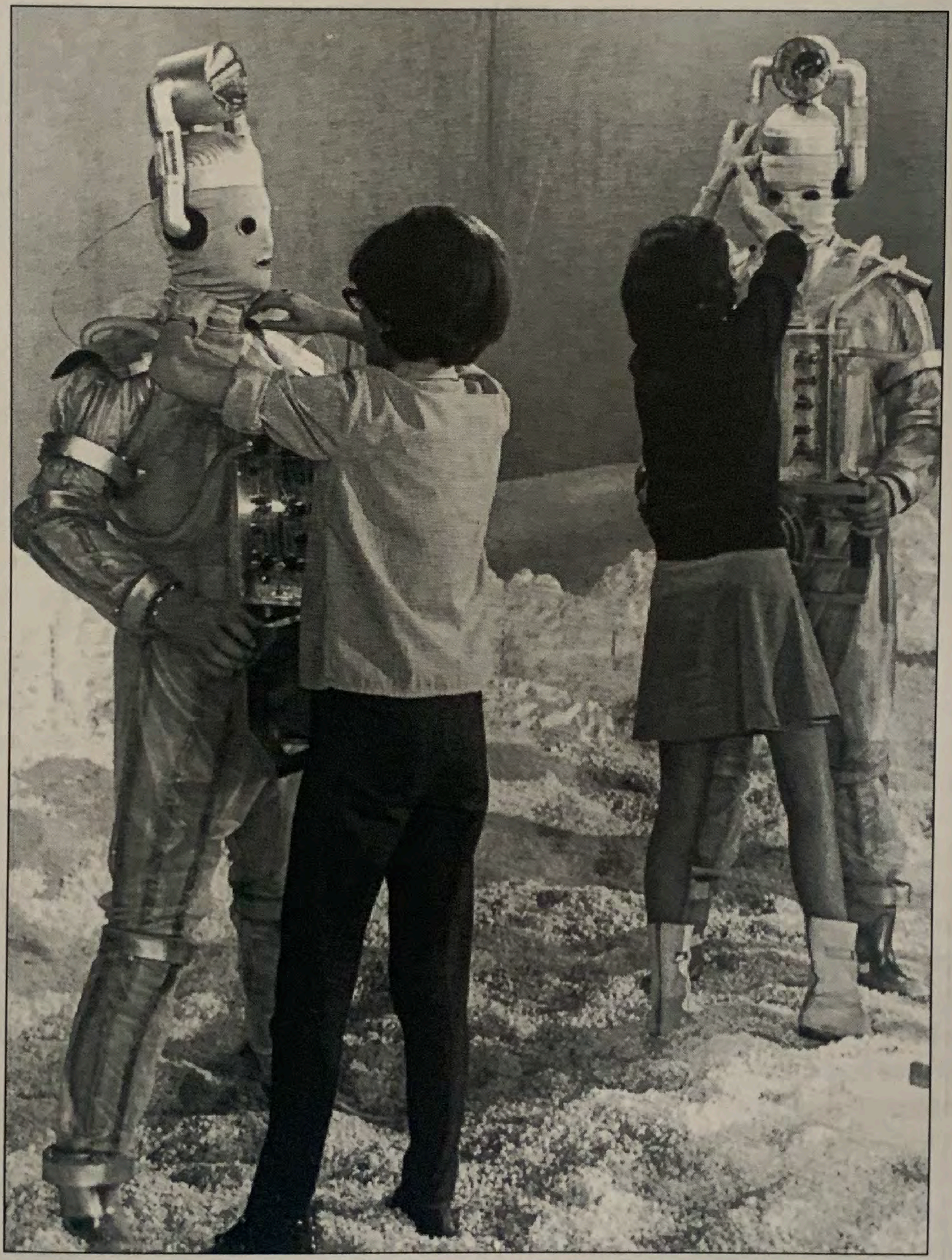


1966 **the costumes** 1967

Alexandra Tynan

"I've got a tremendous amount of guilt on my shoulders for damaging the minds of the youngsters of the Sixties" - **February 1991**

"I WENT to art school in Belfast, did all my exams and then decided that I wanted to become a fashion journalist, which involved writing as well as illustrating articles. So, in 1963 I went to London to find out what I had to do to be a fashion journalist, and found that I'd have to do another seven years on top of the four I'd already done. However, while I was wandering around London I met up with an old friend from Belfast College Of Art who said to me, 'Why don't you come along to Central School where I'm doing costume and set design? You never know, you might get interested in that side of it?' While there I met some people who were looking for staff for Chichester Festival Theatre to make costumes for their coming season, and I got a job with them because I could sew.



Sandra Reid and her assistant apply the finishing touches to the original Cybermen (*The Tenth Planet*, 1966)

I started my career at the Royal Shakespeare Company doing part-time work for three-weeks as a fill-in, then soon after I did a season working on the costumes at the Old Vic, which had just become the National Theatre, which was doing Hamlet with Peter O'Toole. Then I went off to the Theatre Royal, Windsor, where I cut costumes for the first time for the pantomime in the 1963 season. In 1964 I got a job in wardrobe at Glynborne Opera House in Sussex, again making costumes. While I was there I saw an advertisement in *The Telegraph* for costume designers at the BBC. They were looking for people with a design background and who, in fact, had most of the things I already had. I decided to apply because I'd always wanted to work for the BBC, and I started there in 1964 and was there until late 1968.

I started helping out and learning the ropes on all kinds of programmes - drama, comedy, light entertainment, etc. - and was then given a music programme. Doctor Who came about, in 1966, because I was sharing an office with Daphne Dare at the time and she had been working on it more or less since inception. I used to hear her on the phone talking about what was happening with Doctor Who and I used to think, 'Ah, I'm so glad I'll never have to do that!' And then one day Rosemary Ross, who was in charge of telling people what they had to do, came along and said, 'Guess what, Sandra, you've got something really interesting coming up Daphne's coming off Docto Who and you're going to b taking over!' I said, 'Oh really How...nice!' Your life wa really mapped out for you i those days.

Doctor Who at that stage however, was beginning t become quite a prestige sho so I soon realised that I wa quite lucky to be put on it. I also showed that the Costum Department had a certai amount of faith in my abilities So on the one hand I wa pleased, and on the other I was absolutely terrified! My only knowledge up to then of the series was simply listening to what was said by Daphne on the telephone and with people rushing in and out of the office. It was a very busy programme to work on because no sooner had you started on one thing than you were actually planning something else up ahead.

The only priming or training I had to take over was what I learned through Daphne and asking questions. We always got on terribly well and both had quite a strong sense of humour. Daphne was a bit more laid back whereas I was more uptight in those days, but we could always turn something into a bit of a joke. My main worry was Bill Hartnell. I knew that he was difficult and I realise now, in retrospect, that was because of his health and his age (although I thought he was a lot older than late fifties). I only worked with him for three weeks prior to the transition to Patrick Troughton.

A lot of people think that, like designing for comedy, designing science fiction is easy. Neither is easy. Comedy is one of the most difficult things you can design for, science fiction even more so. For example it must not date; you have to try and see ahead so that it still looks fresh and can be interpreted in an SF sense, even ten years from the time you do it. I hadn't much interest in science fiction at that time and it was really like being thrown in at the deep end and I welcomed the challenge.

I did have guidelines on the first show because I was introduced to Kit Pedler who had created the Cybermen. We chatted and he told me about Cybernetics and tried to explain what it was all about. Cybernetics at that stage was something so new - a pacemaker was the only thing that you could put in someone's body that wasn't human flesh and muscle. I guess if I did it now I would approach it from a slightly different direction. I talked to Derek Martinus, the director, as well. He was terrific to work for and most anxious, too, that I should speak to Kit.

Artwork: Phil Bevan

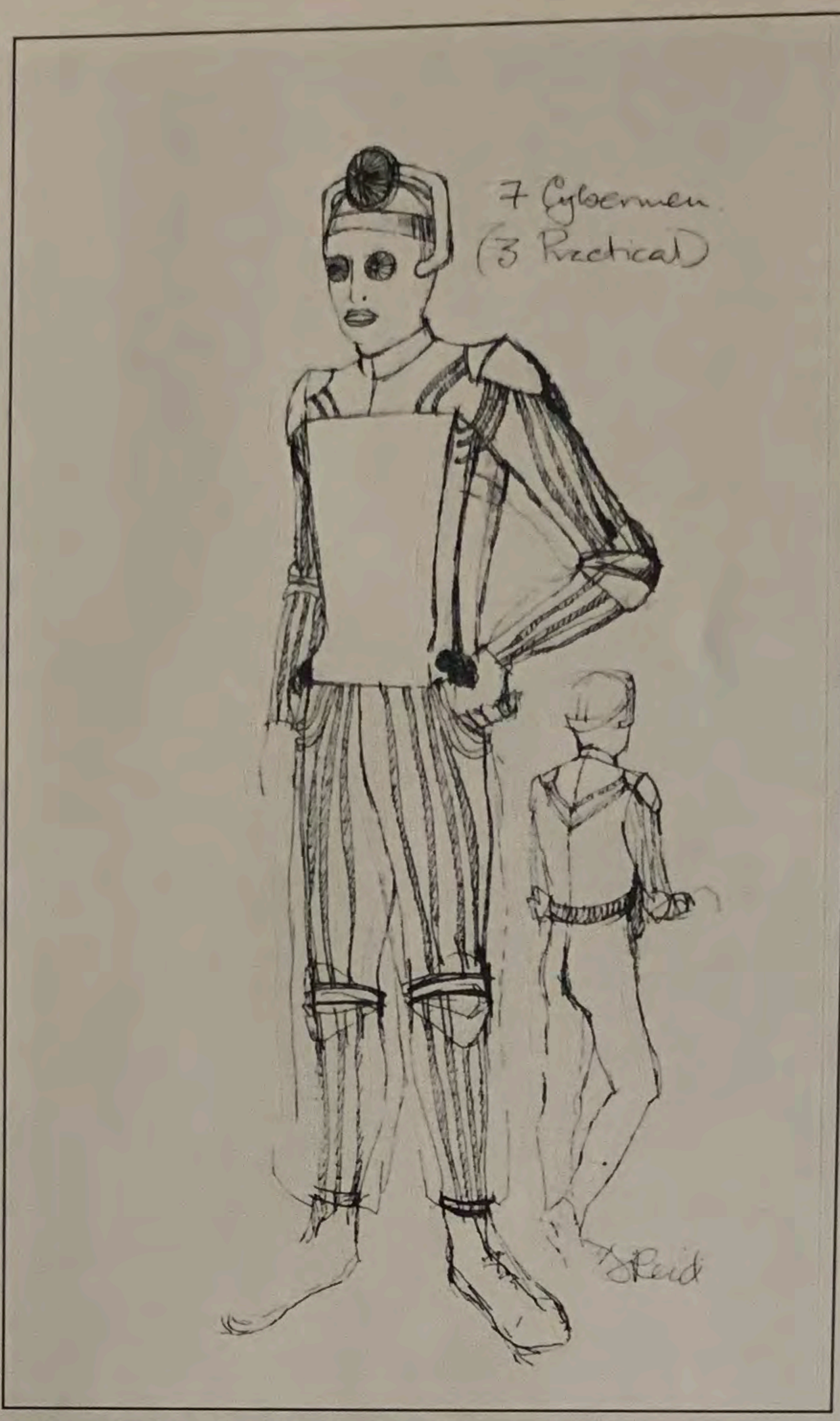
In one sense the Cyber-costume was very simple, but what interests me now is that it was apparently very threatening and frightened a lot of children. I think I've got a tremendous amount of guilt on my shoulders for damaging the minds of the youngsters of the Sixties. I always operated on the basis that less is more, that simplified things can often be much more scary than something which is very involved and very high-tech in its design. Also it was something new then. Young kids today are very aware of Ninja Turtles, semi-humanoid things and androids and they've got a very high tolerance when it comes to being frightened, but back in the Sixties it was different because here was a creature on a Saturday at half past five actually in your living room and kids were diving behind the couch and peering over the top being scared. Black and white was a very powerful medium and it's interesting to see that a lot of advertising nowadays is done in monochrome. Even Madonna uses a lot of black and white. It can be quite sophisticated.

You could only discuss the

Michael Craze, Patrick Troughton and Anneke Wills (*The Highlanders*, 1966)

costumes with the writers, directors and so on up to a certain point, and then you're on your own. You then had to put something down on paper and take it back and tentatively say 'Is that okay?' Whatever I did they liked and there were no changes that I could remember. We were on a very tight schedule and low budget so it was more or less 'Quick, let's get something together now and see how it goes'. Nobody had any idea how it would go. I had to read the scripts through two or three times and then I had very definite visual images. If I didn't get the image straight away then I would have to take it away and think about it a lot.

You have to please a variety of people, like the producer and the director and also the artist who's wearing it, and I have to please myself. If I can make those four people happy and then make the viewer accept it, then I reckon that I have succeeded to a certain point. A costume is usually an extension of the character's personality and I would often talk to the actor - if the actor had been cast, which quite often was not the case - and find out what their feelings were. I'd have to leave enough flexibility for the design to perhaps be just slightly altered, or I might do something to suit a particular casting and then they'd cast someone else who is nowhere like we'd originally seen the character as, so you'd have to keep the essence but redesign to suit the artist. You'd always work closely with the set designers to help compliment the sets and costumes.



Alexandra's original Cyber-design

The director would give final approval. The producer just wants to make sure you're keeping within the budget which you have to learn to do too, which is very difficult for creative people because money and creativity just don't go hand in hand. Nowadays the designer is having to be more and more of a financial expert which is very sad. A lot of people get their jobs on the strength of being able to come within budget and not necessarily on their skill.

Once it got to the stage where it had been agreed by the director, I would do a working drawing of how I felt it should be put together. Here I was at an advantage over a lot of designers because I had worked as a cutter and also with textiles so I could understand a lot of the problems that arose at the cutting stage. I had to take into consideration how the costume would sit on the body, how it would hang, how comfortable or uncomfortable it would be, and it was up to me to make sure it was as comfortable as possible. I would choose the fabrics and decide whether something was going to be made, hired or bought. Now obviously, with Cybermen, you can't buy them off the peg, so they had to be made. I have often said that I felt the first set of Cybermen were very 'Mickey Mouse', in fact I find them embarrassing, but that relates back to what was available at the time, in the time. The head pieces for those were made by Shawcraft while Jack Lovell (*ref: pp. 51-53*) was in on lot two, by which time we had that much more knowledge and expertise about how things worked so they were redesigned from a different standpoint.

I'd attend at least one rehearsal, which was usually to pick up with people I might have spoken to on the phone but not actually met. Naturally the Cybermen had to be fitted for their costumes because of their size and height but I was lucky, very lucky, in that the people who played those parts were very co-operative and totally professional (they weren't going to whinge about something not being comfortable or whatever). We used a lot of sticky tape for the first Cybermen and we learnt a lot. There's a famous photograph of me with Derek Martinus and Edwina Craze pulling a Mark I Cyberman up off the ground, because once they fell down they couldn't get up!

I was introduced to William Hartnell first of all and I knew he'd probably test me out, as he did most people. He did, the first day I was there! I was terribly nervous because I wasn't quite sure how it was all going to go. I was summoned to his dressing room, and he said, 'I can't find my hat, my hat's not here!' He was really stroppy. I was trembling in my boots and I said, 'Oh well, we'll just have to find it won't we', or something (I was a bit patronising in my terror). We looked around and I said, 'Oh look, there it is'. He'd kicked up a real fuss while, all along, it was sitting on his chair under something else, so I said, 'You've got it after all, haven't you?' I think he realised I'd been tested and I hadn't flapped or got mad with him. It was fine after that and I always greeted him in a friendly way and called him 'Mr. Hartnell'.

Going in as a stranger at the end of it I think that people were, in one sense, relieved that Bill was going, although naturally nobody would voice that, and in another sense sad because he really had made that show. The sad part about it was that his health and his memory were going and he had all these techniques that he used when he forgot lines. There was a certain amount of wariness because the new boy was coming in to take over, much younger and much more vital, and it must have been awful for Bill.

Patrick treated him very sensitively on the day of the chan e-over. I mean, he made little jokes - like he'd walked into the stu o when we had both of them in there and he would say 'W s Who?' and that sort of thing - which poor old Bill didn't reac o very positively. But Patrick was very sensitive to how Bill have been feeling and he played it very carefully and close to s chest.

SYDNEY Newman, Innes Lloyd, myself and Patric course all met together in a basement dressing room at BBC. Innes had said to me, 'He needs a Bohemian l about him, a sort of hobo almost'. Patrick also had so ideas about how he wanted to look so I was given a rou idea. I had brought down some stuff that he could try on but came to the feeling that maybe he needed something else, some checked trousers. We had a couple of hats for him at original fitting and we selected the tall, peaked one. He didn't ke it for long because, although people thought he wore a wig, it w s his own hair, and it gradually became thicker and more 'Beatle-ish' and the hat no longer fitted properly.

We had a second meeting where I had some other stuff organised and they were all happy with what I came up with. That was his first fitting. Patrick was a very professional man and very experienced. I think he looked on it as a lot of fun because he was very puckish.

The Power of the Daleks (*1966*)...

I was forever clothing scientists on DOCTOR WHO! Lab coats over the past 100 years have changed very little. The fabric's different and the cut's changed slightly but basically they're the same, so you take the basic idea and change it a bit from story to story to make it look a little bit different. I reckon with some costumes there needs to be an element of design continuity so that the scientists or technicians are recognisable as such.

With the regular characters, you have to think very much about the personality. There were costumes done for DOCTOR WHO in latter years for companions which I felt were totally inappropriate.

in fact quite tasteless. They lowered the whole tone of the series to a level which it didn't warrant. The designer has to take so many things into consideration: the garments have to make a statement; they have to 'work' for the characters; the actors must be comfortable; and there must be some personal element of the designer's own style. With black and white pictures it was easy because one was concerned with shape, line and an element of pattern. When colour is added the whole thing changes dramatically and there is a lot of extra work.

I remember when I worked with Anneke Wills (*Polly*). She was very wilful in many ways about what she wanted to wear. She was young and vital and thought she knew everything about costumes. To a certain extent she had a good feel for what suited her, but I felt that as far as Doctor Who went her ideas needed to be tempered. Sometimes you have to compromise to keep everything on an even keel.

The Highlanders...

Period stories never worked very well with the customers. It had to be a very strong story and there had to be something in it which really caught the attention, otherwise people thought 'Period costume? Boring' and switch off. I liked it because the uniforms were hired, but I think we made Hannah Gordon's costume. Polly and Ben's stuff was usually bought off the peg although, occasionally, I made something for them. *The Highlanders* was Frazer Hines' first story and he soon got very fed up with wearing the same old thing over and over again, and eventually he ended up wearing a light-coloured polo neck sweater with his kilt to have a more contemporary look.

The Underwater Menace (1967)...

I rather liked that whole production, though unfortunately some of the costumes I'd designed were never used. I did quite a lot of the work on the costumes myself, especially the ones that the girls wore with the shells on the bodice. For the Fish People we used a stretchy fabric and had sequins sewn on to it, but when they got into the water tank at Ealing Studios the costumes were inclined to stretch quite a lot at the crotch. Nowadays of course we'd use Lycra and have no problems! The sequins also began to lose their sequinny sparkle after they'd been in the water for a long time.

In order to fly them across the studio we were able to fit a harness to the body, and I seem to remember a television camera shooting them through a fish tank to give the impression that they were swimming, which was simple but very effective. I really thought that was a terrific show. I was helped on that one by Juanita Waterson who had just joined the BBC. She was sent to give me a hand because it was quite heavy going, especially with all the costumes getting wet and everything!

The Moonbase...

I'd already started on the second lot of Cybermen - having thought they'd gone forever - when I took ill. Just before I went into hospital for quite a few weeks I was lying in bed talking for hours on the phone to people trying to get the whole thing in order. Daphne Dare came in and helped to get it back together, and there were various other people who helped her. I was back for a while and then I had a relapse, but I certainly got as far as designing the second lot of Cybermen but missed the rest of that story and the one after (*The Macra Terror*).

We had a bit more time and money which allowed us to do more of what we really wanted with them. They were simplified in style but they still retained the essential elements of the first lot, like the piano accordion on their chests, and also their hands were covered. On the first lot they weren't covered because I forgot - they should have had gloves! On the first day of filming Gillian James, the make-up supervisor, came rushing into the wardrobe area and said, 'Sandra, what are you going to do about the hands - you said you were going to use gloves!' So we had to make their hands up with a silvery make-up and, in retrospect, I think that was a good thing because it showed that there was a humanoid element still there whereas, with the second lot, it was much more stylised (just a thumb, forefinger and the rest of the hand). I noticed your ungloved Cyberman on the cover of your recent *Moonbase* Photonovel (*ref: The DWB Compendium*) with the tubes going into the hands, and I thought that looked rather good, why didn't I think of it!

The Faceless Ones...

I think Daphne had already kicked it off and I then returned. It was easier when the stories had contemporary settings, but again it's got to be something that doesn't date too much. Quite often I find - particularly with contemporary mini-series - that it may be made and not be shown for another eighteen months so it must not date in that time. Looking back at the Sixties and what was contemporary then seems a bit dated now, but then all that Sixties stuff is suddenly coming back into fashion so there's a certain attraction for that period. But it was nice to do something modern because it gave you a different type of flexibility.

The Evil of the Daleks...

The mystique surrounding certain stories of my period is something that amazes me. I suppose with so many of the episodes missing from that time lends them an air of mystery and a sort of glamour; maybe if you saw them today they might not be so glamorous. It's like interviewing Michelangelo and asking him how he felt about the Sistine Chapel! It always amuses me on the odd occasion where I have read something about my designs or whatever and it's suddenly blown into some incredibly sort of intellectual thing with all this glamour attached to it. If they only knew it was something slung on the back of a coffee-stained envelope that I had to get in by 4:00pm!

I felt that I wanted to have some kind of an input because most of the costumes on that story were hired from Bermans or Nathans which, in those days, were two separate companies. We made the Ruth Maxtible costume at the BBC, and it's a pity Doctor Who wasn't in colour then because it was a beautiful costume.

The Tomb of the Cybermen...

It wasn't my decision not to change the Cybermen. It was simply the powers that be who said, 'They're fine the way they are, let's leave them that way'. They gradually changed after that, which I think is good because the Mark II Cybermen would look really silly now! Certain elements that I put in are still there, which can't be changed because they're an integral part of the Cybermen. The Cyber Controller was a much more upmarket, highly intellectual version. There were quite a few extra Cyber-costumes for that series and it was shot so that the scenes were more crowded.

The Tomb of the Cybermen was a marvellous story. I was at Ealing when the Cybermen left their sealed tombs. It was stunning, quite terrifying, and it made the hair on the back of your neck rise. It could only be done in one take because they'd spent hours putting

On location at Grim's Dyke, near Harrow, in 1967 for *The Evil of the Daleks*, Deborah Watling prepares to feed the 'flying pests'

plastic wrap over the front of the tombs, and once the Cybermen had broken through, that was it!

THEY decided, at that stage, that they would change the costume designer much more frequently so that no-one would have a complete monopoly on it, because one did get tired. I think the time that I got sick made them realise it was too much pressure, and so from then on it was given to people in shorter spans.

I've always been proud of my association with the BBC - it was the most wonderful experience and training that I could ever have had. It was an experience that I wasn't aware at the time was so important, now I can see that it was.

I watched DOCTOR WHO after I left whenever I could with great interest because I always found it very exciting visually. There have been things which I think were bad, but not to do with the art direction. I found that the production standards on a couple of them, especially in the 25th year, were terrible. I'm thinking of *Silver Nemesis* in particular, where there were things which I know would not be accepted in general film and television work, one of which was the standard of the sound. The actors were obviously wearing body mikes on location as the sound had so many different qualities to it and it was very badly done. I'd looked forward to that show enormously and I was terribly disappointed.

***The Power of the Daleks*, 1966**

I think, if the Cybermen ever came back, they'd need to return in a very different way. They should perhaps start to become more human, which can be sinister in itself. They've got enough knowledge to make themselves look real and be accepted into society. It would be rather fun to do something where this group of people arrived and nobody knew they were actually Cybermen until they revealed themselves well into the story.

After I left DOCTOR WHO I did THE VAL DOONICAN SHOW which was terrific fun, some work with Dave Allen, then I did a period serial for BBC2 just before I left to go to Australia. I wanted a change and I also found that the BBC was starting to sort of strangle itself with red tape. I just felt that I needed to get away, so I paid ten pounds and came to Australia.

I arrived here with absolutely nothing because I'd spent everything I had on the ship on the way out. Nobody would hire me as a costume designer because I was not a set designer too, and in those days you had to be both. It's only in the last ten years they've accepted the fact that you may specialise, so I had to go back to literally picking up pins again and ended up back in the theatre with the Australian Opera making costumes.

During the Seventies I was in education teaching tertiary level students doing teacher training in drama, and it was 1981 before I was invited by the ABC to join them as a designer. Then I had two children with a Mr. Tynan! I have my own business now specialising in image consultancy, personal and corporate presentation and I do a lot of public speaking and run training programmes.

When I went back into freelance work I decided to use my married name, which has caused a great deal of hassle for people like David Banks, who spent a long time trying to track me down. Nobody had ever heard of Sandra Reid in Australia! I had just come back from my first trip to England in ten years in 1985, and within a month I had a phone call from the ABC saying they had a letter for me from England from somebody trying to track me down. I then got in touch with David Banks and filled him in with information for his Cyberman book.

I thought, when I had finished on DOCTOR WHO, that's it forever, goodbye Cybermen, and suddenly there they were again back in my life! It's marvellous and I love every minute of it. I've met really interesting people and made new friends. I'm always willing to appear in public at co- ventions, just to make that cont t with people and be part of th enjoyment. It's great to say t you've been involved with son thing which is of such a hi standard and which has gone being a high standard for so m years, because there aren't t many things which you can that about!

If offered the opportunity redesign the Cybermen I th I'd have to take the challenge, be chicken if I didn't. I would take that as probably the bigg challenge of my career." ❑

● **Interviewed by Gary Leigh**

● **Postscript:** *Alexandra still runs her image consultancy business - Player's Image - in Gardenvale, Melbourne, Australia.*

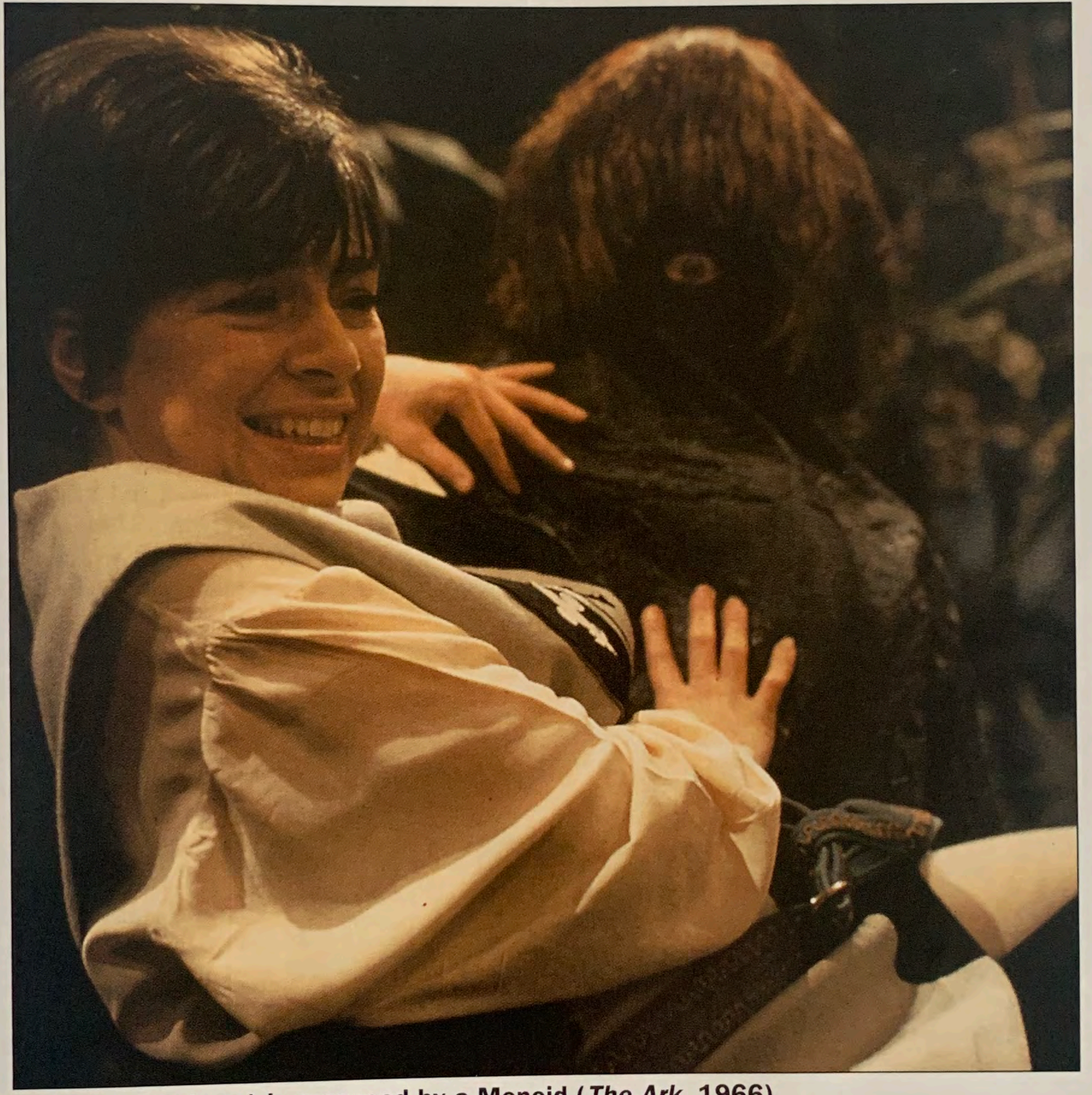
Alexandra Tynan with Dudley Simpson (left) and Robert Jewell at a 1991 DOCTOR WHO convention in Melbourne, Australia

1964 **monster-makers** 1969

Jack & John Lovell

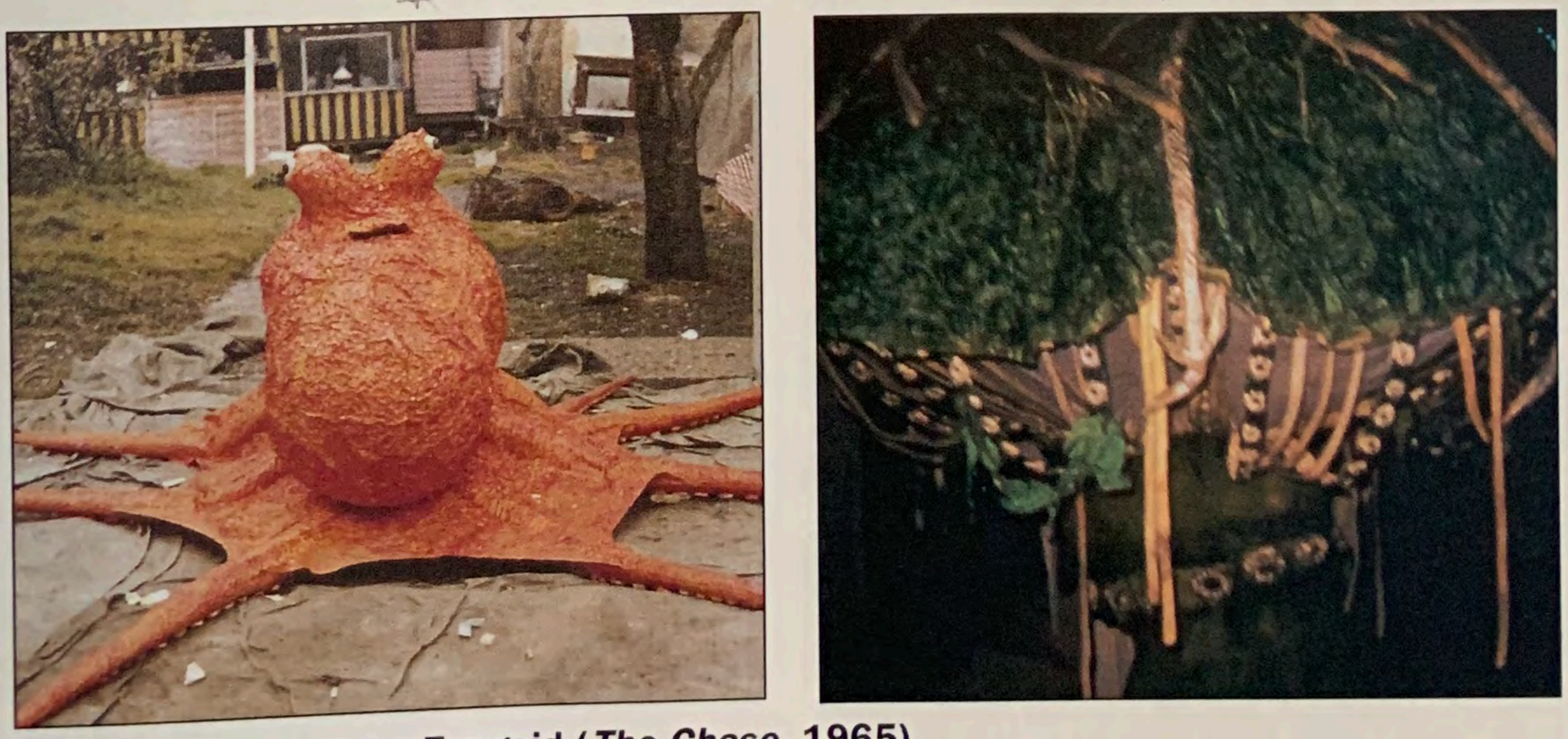
"We were never credited for our contribution to DOCTOR WHO*"* - **April 1989**

JACK: I WAS born into showbusiness. My father was an actor in the silent movies of the early Twenties, and as a child I sometimes appeared in them with him. He also worked in panto with the likes of Nellie Wallace and the great comedian Lupino Lane. Later on I got involved with Sid Chaplin, then his brother Charlie, who were all on the music hall circuit then. All the time I was travelling around the country with my father, learning the trade of carpentry and modelling from the theatre carpenters and prop makers who would teach me things in the wings whilst the show would be in progress.


Dodo (Jackie Lane) is menaced by a Monoid (*The Ark*, 1966)

I learnt a lot in the Thirties when things started to become more technical. I went to the Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts but I found that with my background in the theatre I knew more about it than my teachers! It wasn't until after the war that I had my own company doing the things that I do now, which was mainly for feature films. I've supplied props for *Anthony & Cleopatra*, *The Viking Queen*, *Cromwell*, *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Bridge Over the River Kwai*, *Khartoum*, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, *She*, *One Million Years B.C.*, the James Bond films, *The Prisoner of Zenda*, *Clash of the Titans*, *Oliver!*, *2000 Years A.D.*, *Superman*, *A Clockwork Orange*, and more recently we've just built the Batmobile for the new *Batman* film.

My involvement with the BBC came about when I was doing costumes for their suppliers, Bermans & Nathans. I worked for many people at the BBC and that's how I came across Daphne Dare.


The Mire Beast and a Fungoid (*The Chase*, 1965)

One of the first series was THE QUATERMASS EXPERIMENT. I used to make all sorts of things, from specially moulded badges and helmets to the actual monsters. I gather someone from the DOCTOR WHO team must have come up to the Costume Department and seen the work I'd

done and asked if I could do the stuff for them, and I said yes.
JOHN: I think a reason we didn't do the Daleks in the beginning would have been that our line is costumes where the Dalek is more or less a robot. Saying that we also made spaceships, badges, consoles, and all the helmets and props like shields and lances for the historical stories.

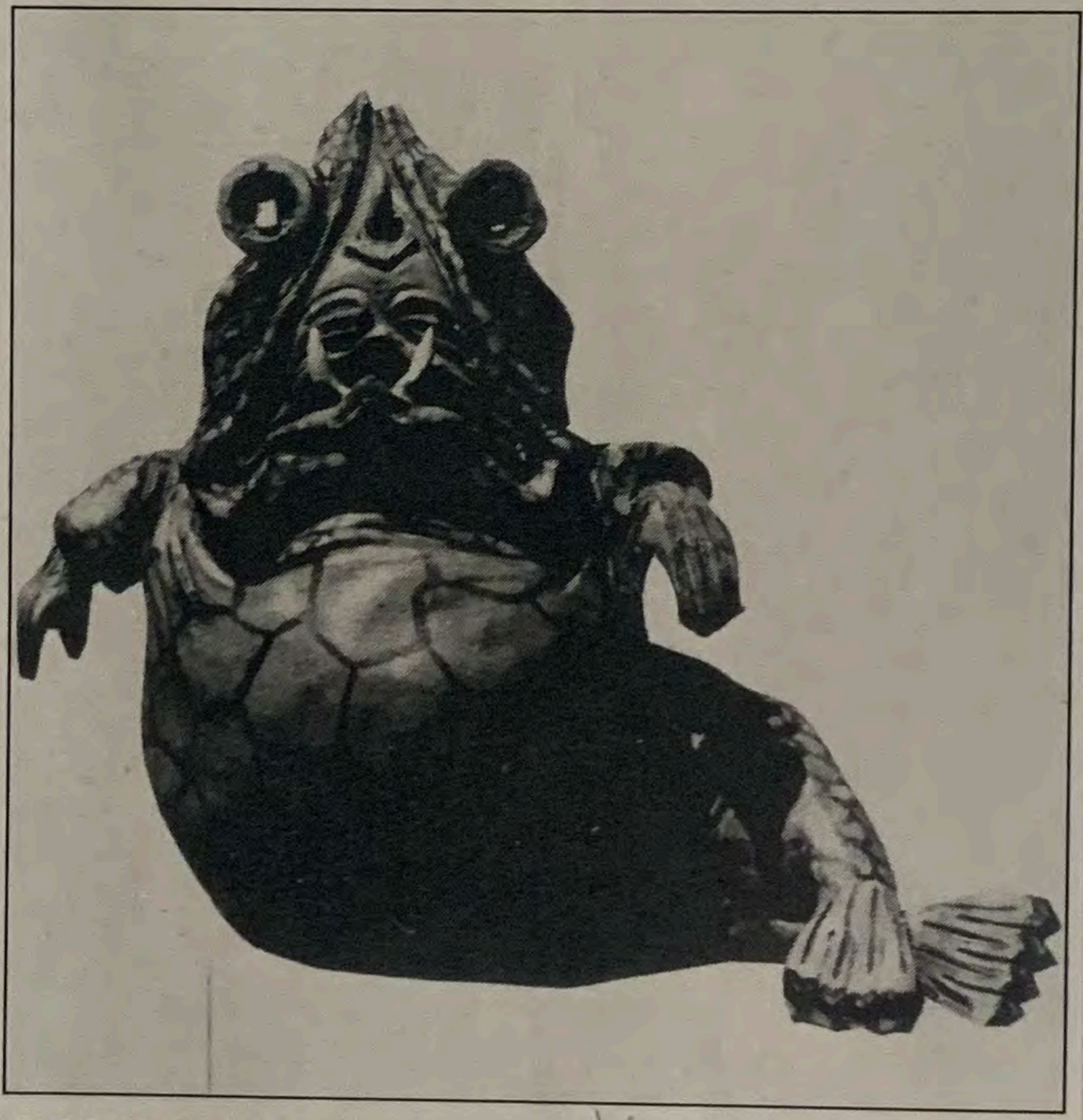
JACK: I thought the Daleks were a very good design and I would probably have done them along the same lines, though maybe in plywood rather than fibre glass. The first monster we did for DOCTOR WHO was the Voord. We made those from skin suits and they had some wrestlers in them, and because they'd have to sit around from seven in the morning until ten when they were called, two of these tough wrestlers actually fainted!

JOHN: Around that time I remember we used to work six or seven days a week from our garage at home in Battersea. I'd finish early on a Saturday, perhaps go shopping at three o'clock, come home and the first thing I'd do was sit down and watch DOCTOR WHO. I've always liked science fiction so I watched it avidly as a viewer, and especially to see how the stuff we had done for it came over. At the same time we were doing work for the cinema - you couldn't go to the pictures in those days without seeing at least one thing made by us!

JACK: Doing props for the historical stories, the BBC would take photostats from reference books, send them to us and ask us if we could copy them. Then they'd give us the various measurements and we'd get on with it. We'd already done the Ghengis Khan film with James Mason in 1961 and we hired the helmets and props from that to the BBC. That was our first contribution to DOCTOR WHO (*Marco Polo*, 1964).

JOHN: I don't know why we were never credited for our contribution to DOCTOR WHO. We phoned the BBC up once because we were cross at the way the DOCTOR WHO credits appeared in the *Radio Times*. It made it look as though the designer of the story had designed and made the whole lot on a particular job that we'd done, when in reality all the designers would do was to give us a really basic outline drawing and it was left to us to interpret it the best way we could.

We'd run through the ideas with the BBC's costume designers and maybe come up with other ideas and sometimes say we don't think it can be done like that so we'll devise it another way. More often than not they'd get an idea from the script of what's asked for and leave it in our hands anyway.


A Rill (*Galaxy 4*, 1965)

We did the Mire Beast and the Fungoids for the first Dalek story we worked on (*The Chase*, 1965). They were like most of the stuff we did at that time; foam would create the actual shape and we'd cover it with sheets of rubber. I remember going to the Natural History Museum and looking up tentacles and suckers for the Mire Beast. It was painted bright orange to make it a particular shade of grey when filmed in monochrome. The Fungoids were one of the few creatures that could actually kill a Dalek. It was a sort of umbrella shape that would envelope and suffocate its victim.

The Rill (*Galaxy 4*) was like a great black walrus with fangs, but strangely the Chumblies don't strike a chord. I think Shawcraft must have made those because they made most of the robotic creations like the Daleks and the Mechanoids.

JACK: That's yak hair on the Monoids, you know?

JOHN: I don't recall the hair being on the Monoid design when they gave it to us. It was bald more or less (it could have been put on by the costume designer as an afterthought). The actors moved the Monoid eyes from side to side with their tongues! The eye was a ping pong ball level with their tongue. The actors probably looked out through holes in the mask, which is maybe why the upper part of the mask was covered with hair to conceal the holes, because I'm certain they were originally never meant to have hair. We were in the middle of doing the Monoids when we moved our working premises from our garage to Chatham Road.

JACK: We used to stand by on the set all the time when we were working on the show and we knew all the cast. William Hartnell was quite a nice man although I didn't have much to do with him. I thought he was very good as DOCTOR WHO - one of the best.

JOHN: I used to go to the canteen with Anneke Wills and all her pals. We used to mix with the cast quite a lot on the programmes we used to work on.

JACK: We only did the chest units on those original Cybermen, not the actual fabric costume or the helmet, but on their later appearances we did more and more until we were doing the entire costumes. We were given an initial design by the designer but it would evolve into what we would make of it. We've still got all our original moulds somewhere. When they made their second appearance they were totally redesigned because they wanted to make them much more frightening.

JOHN: I think they wanted to make them more horrendous because the first ones were a fudge-up. We did the whole lot on the Mark II Cybermen; the tubing, the costumes, the toy plastic balls - the whole lot. If you look carefully at a photo of a Mark II Cyberman you can see the small holes we drilled in to the side of the neck to let air in.

JACK: Really we just tidied them up and made them a lot smoother after their first appearance. We didn't make the Cyber Controller's head. That was adapted at the BBC from a standard Mark II helmet.

We weren't responsible for the f t version of the Yeti, which the B didn't like because they were like cud bears. They wanted to make them m gruesome than their first appearance we were in charge of remaking the Also the originals were framed out bamboo and quickly fell to pieces ours were very much tougher and w made using grey yak hair.

The Ice Warriors were made out fibreglass and the claws were rubb Martin Baugh was the designer then a took a lot of publicity for them at t time in photos and press stories. W built about five in all of various sizes, including a midget, and made the Ice Lord later on which was very similar.

We only made a couple of Mark III Cybermen (*The Wheel Space*, 1968) from the moulds of the Mark II but without the blac tape around the eyes and mouth. Instead teardrops were added to the eyes to allow more air to circulate. The costumes were basically the same as before but the reason the chest units were upside down was because the wardrobe department at the BBC were not looking at what they were supposed to be doing! We did the Servo Robot at the same time which was a very cheap thing to make.

JOHN: We did the Quarks as well. The main body was glass fibre and the rest all perspex and plastic. There was a little boy squeezed inside each one and it was very difficult for them. I think the brief said the feet had to lift up a bit to be able to walk around, and from what I can remember they were a bit crude and cheap looking.

Also some robots we made for a series called OUT OF THE UNKNOWN resurfaced a few months later in DOCTOR WHO sprayed grey and yellow (*The Mind Robber, 1968*). I was quite amazed at the time, though I supposed it was the BBC running out of money again! We also built the toy soldiers for that story and used the helmets we'd made for *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* as the basis for those.

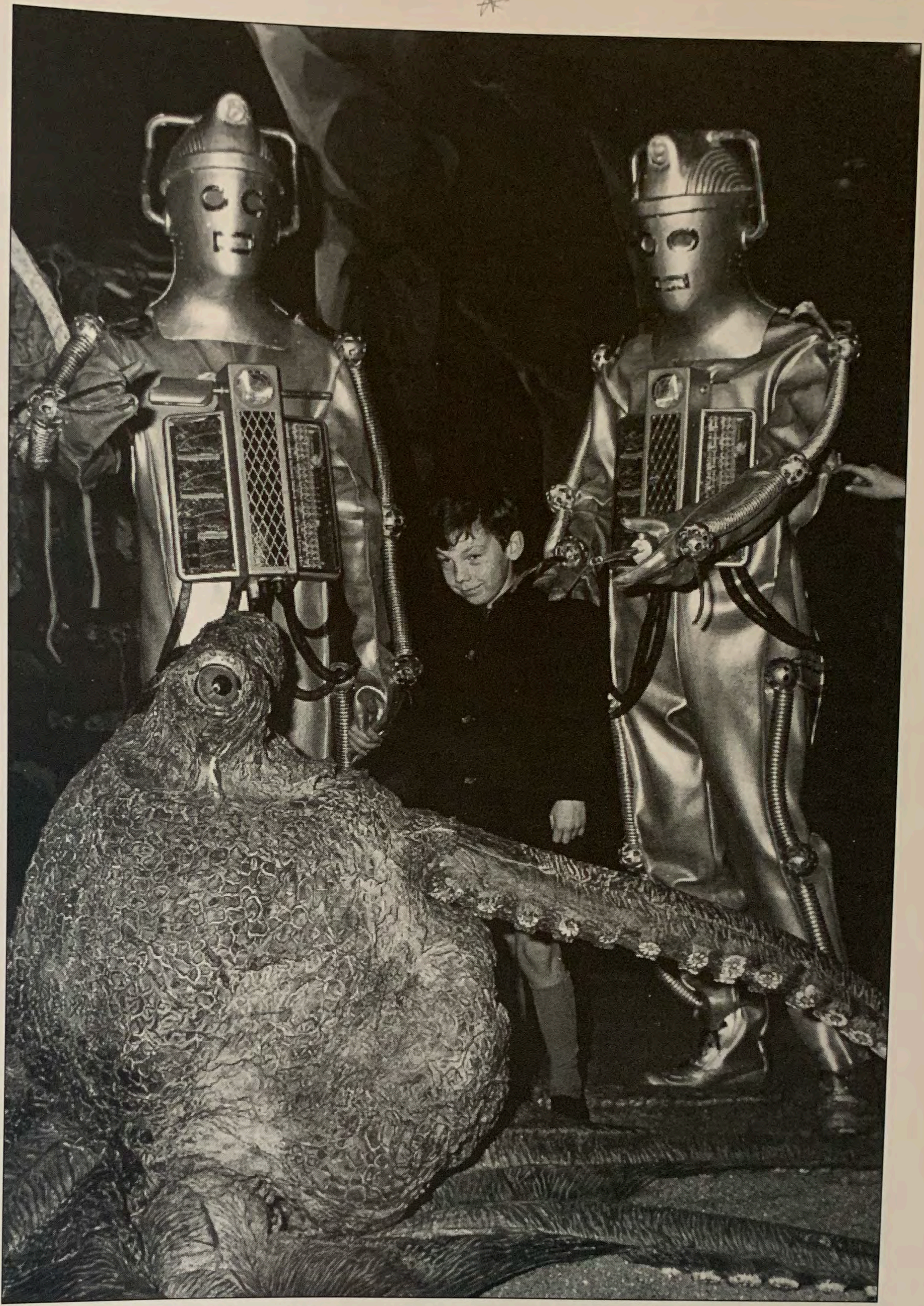
JACK: I think designers like to update these things to make their mark on the programme. Even if the originals are brilliant, they do like to put their own stamp on a monster. I remember Bobi Bartlett asked us to put five fingers on the Mark IV Cybermen (*The Invasion*, 1968) for some reason. Before they'd only got three or four.

JOHN: We were dropped by the BBC in the end because they started using other people. Bobi Bartlett started the ball rolling when her husband started coming down to our workshops supposedly waiting for her, and after a few weeks work started to slow down and when we asked her what was happening she said 'Oh, my husband's doing them'. Before we knew it, we suspect he was copying our techniques and getting the work we would normally have done. When we used to chase the BBC up for work during Jon Pertwee's time they used to say 'Oh, we're slipping away from robots (or whatever) because we can't afford it'. We did make those spacesuits that appeared in *The Ambassadors of Death*, although they were actually made for MOON ZERO 2 and the BBC hired them out from Berman's & Nathan's for that story.

After that we began making racing cars. We used to design and build car bodies, especially for the formula one circuit, but we still retained some work in films like *Clash Of The Titans* and, more recently, *Batman*. We also built the K7 Bluebird replica for the BBC's production about the last sixty days of Donald Campbell (SPEED KING, *produced by Innes Lloyd*).

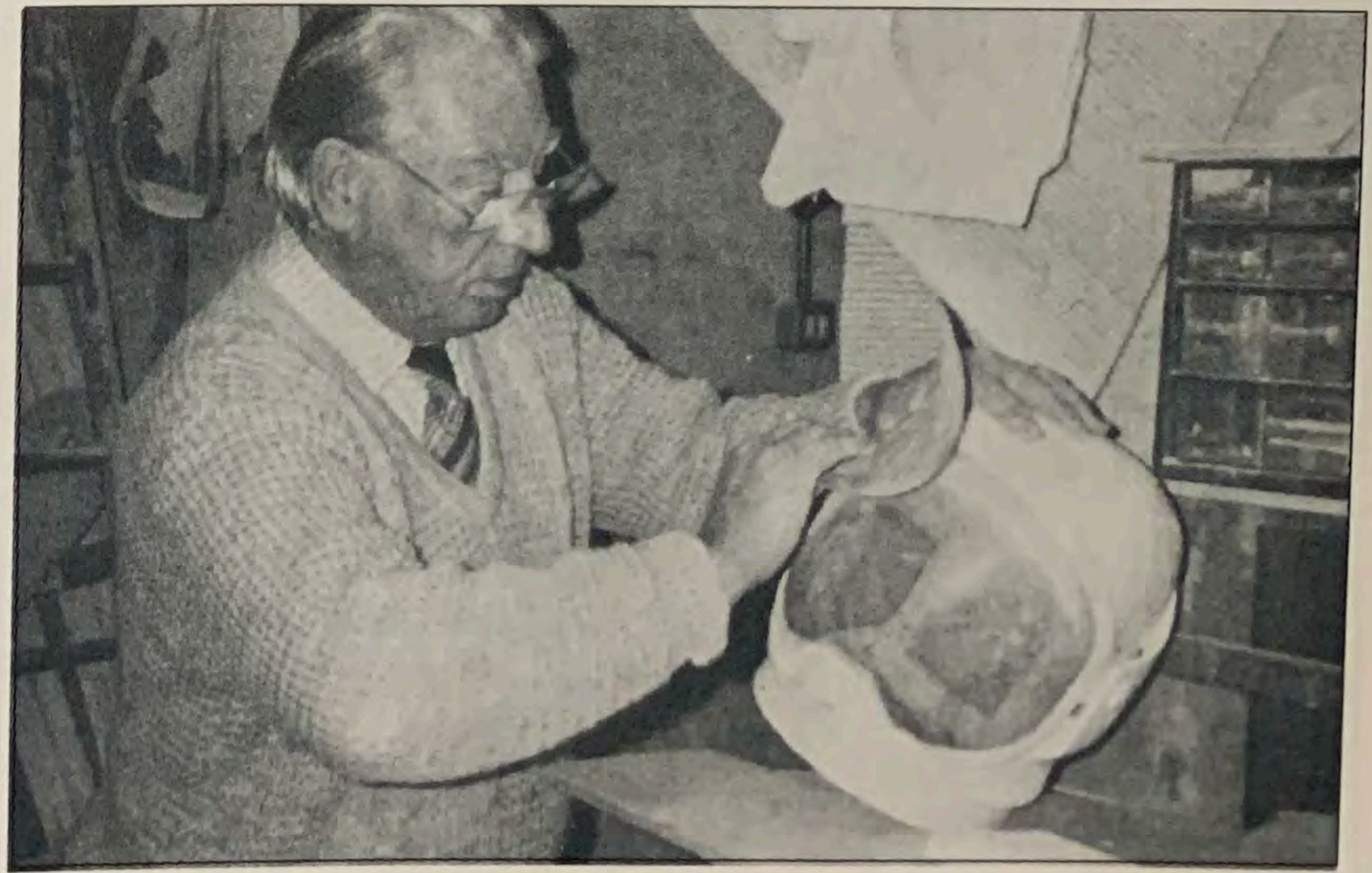
JACK: I'd love to do some more work on DOCTOR WHO now, just to see what it would be like working on the show after all these years. Maybe we could do the next appearance of the Cybermen; wouldn't it be lovely to bring back our version of a monster we played a part in creating? ❑

- **Interviewed by Sheldon Collins and Gary Leigh April 1989**

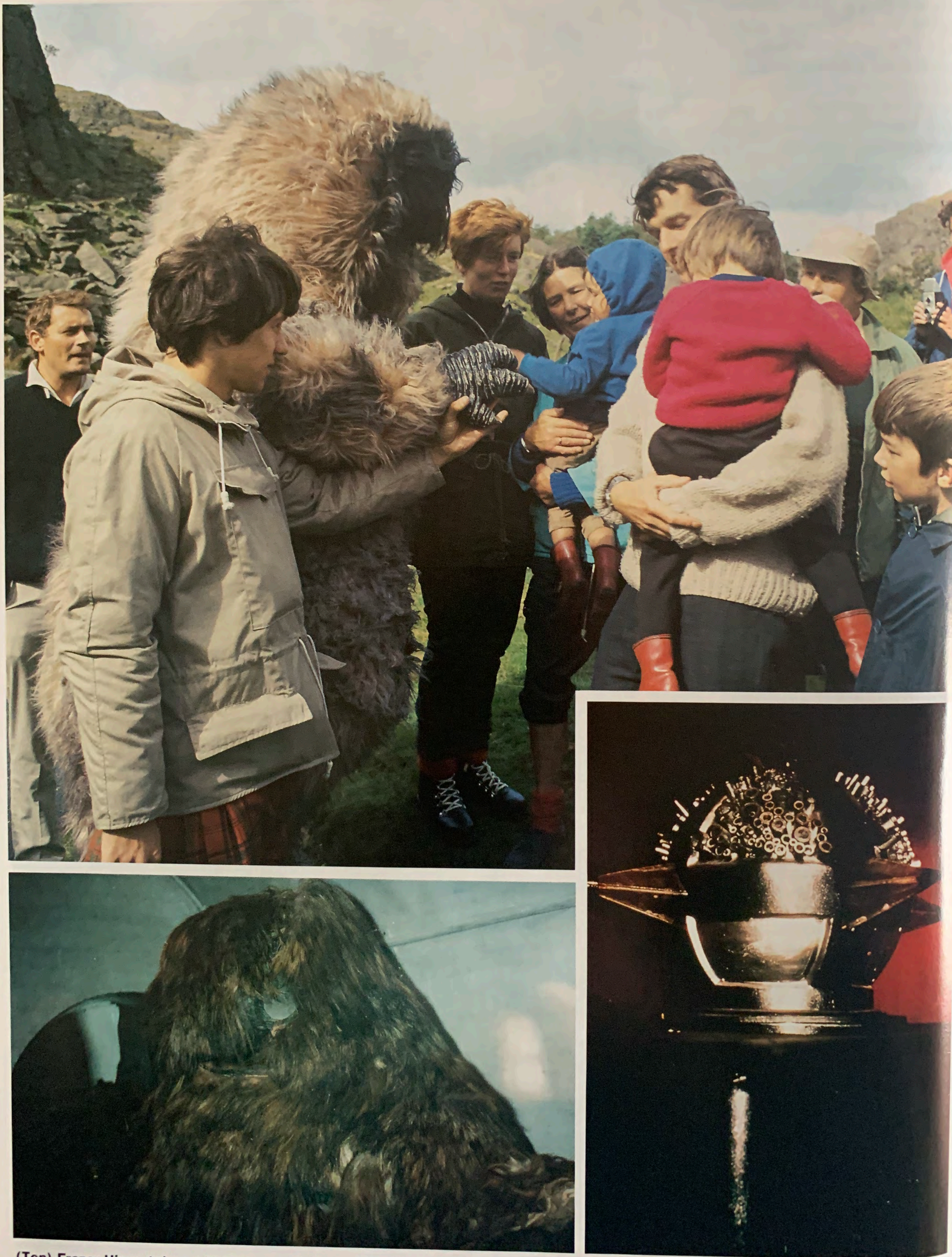


The 1967 Doctor Who exhibition at Olympia displayed much of the Lovell's handiwork, including the Mark II Cybermen and the Mire Beast (*The Chase*, 1965)

Carole and Voord (*The Keys of Marinus, 1964*)



Jack Lovell cleans one of his helmets which were used in *The Ambassadors of Death* (1970)



(Top) Frazer Hines takes a Yeti on a walkabout (*The Abominable Snowmen*, 1967). (Below left) An original Mark II Yeti (*The Web of Fear*, 1967). (Below right) A Quark (*The Dominators*, 1968)

1967

the writers

1968

Mervyn Haisman

"We were actually working on a third Yeti story which would have introduced Jon Pertwee's Doctor" **- April 1985**

"I STARTED my professional life as an actor, then I went into the life insurance world for ten years. Towards the end of this period I returned to acting, in No Hiding Place, but things had changed so much in those intervening ten years. I was rather used to getting on with it and not standing around in rehearsals for ten days or more.

One of my clients in life insurance was John Whiting, the playwright, and I talked to him about writing and he said, 'Well, you're an actor, you know good dialogue, so have a go'. I did, and I was lucky enough in 1964, after a couple of false starts, to write a Doctor Finlay's Casebook. They liked it and I was commissioned to do another, which is when I threw in my life insurance job. I've been writing full time since January 1965.

Patrick Troughton with two unmasked Yeti in Snowdonia, North Wales (*The Abominable Snowmen*, 1967)

One of the actors I met in No Hiding Place was a man called Henry Soskin, his stage name, but he also wrote under the name of Henry Lincoln. We found we lived fairly close to one another and used to meet up from time to time. We got together as a writing team with Doctor Who. Henry knew Patrick Troughton as a fellow actor, and Pat had casually remarked that he was looking for something different. So we thought of an idea that is recognisable, yet turns out to be different, say, for example, the Loch Ness Monster. That's when we hit upon the idea of the Yeti. We did a very brief outline on it and sent it in. The producer and script editor then met us and asked us to do a treatment and develop it. They liked what they saw and commissioned us.

The Abominable Snowmen (1967) was set in Tibet and that proved so successful that, before it actually went out, they asked us to do another Yeti story! The first story was shot on location in the Welsh mountains, and Henry, my wife and I all went up to North Wales thinking we'd be staying in the hotel with the rest of the cast, but everything was completely booked up. This was way out in the wilds, so the three of us slept in my old shooting-brake and we were freezing!

Henry and I, having both stemmed from a mutual theatre background, actually drew the sets and did drawings of the Yeti ourselves. We didn't quite envisage them with such baggy legs. We were after something that looked fairly cuddly but had this surprising ferociousness about it. We also did a lot of the design work for the monastery and so on because we felt, certainly in those days, actually suggesting ways of doing it showed that you'd done a lot of homework on the subject.

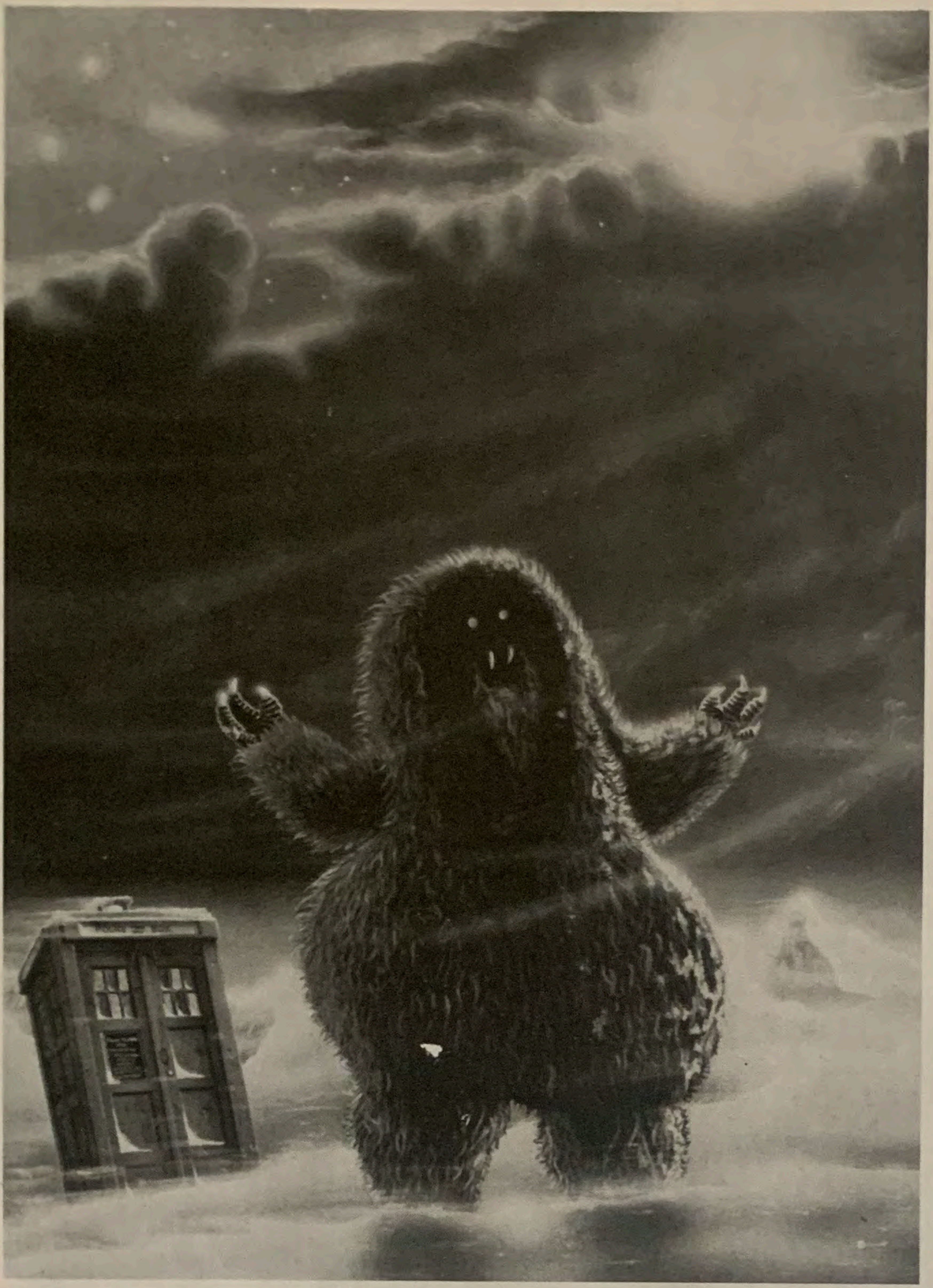
When we came to do the second Yeti story (*The Web of Fear*, 1968), we thought it would be great fun to carry on the character of Travers and come back to him when he was an old man. I don't remember whether it was Henry's or my idea to set it in the London Underground - I think we jointly came to the conclusion that the simplest way for any creature or alien to get around London would be via the Underground system. We designed sections of tunnels for curves and straights and the platform. Lucky for us that we did because London Transport forbade us to use the actual Underground for filming, so it was all studio. When it went out they phoned us horrified that we'd gone down and filmed without their permission. It looked so real and they were completely taken in by it!

Recently, after all these years, I saw episode one of *The Web of Fear* and I was very pleased to see how good it was, particularly under Douglas Camfield's direction. I could see why Dougie wanted the Yeti redesigned but personally I didn't particularly like them. They looked more fiercesome than the original concept of the Yeti, which was that it should look cuddly and harmless and yet had this fiercesome power. In this story I think they looked far too menacing from the word go, which I thought was a bit of a pity.

I'm bloody mad, of course, that the rest of the episodes were destroyed. The BBC went through a period of trying to save tape - and we're talking about pennies here. They wiped an awful lot of good television. It was a tremendous pity.

Henry and I also invented the character of Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart - who at that time was a Colonel. There was no brief, we simply created the character entirely for the story. I'm glad he's survived to this day.

Looking back I can see why this period is still fondly remem-



Artwork by Johnny Waudby

bered to this day, but when we were doing it we were just working writers and got on with it and thought 'Right, where's the next crust coming from?'

I suppose Henry and I also had an eye on the marketing potential of the Yeti. Terry Nation was a very astute business man, and when he created the Daleks he was right up front while the BBC were completely unaware of the merchandising value. Shortly after the Daleks took off the BBC handed everything to BBC Enterprises, and thereafter all associated merchandising had to go through the BBC.

That rather brings me on to the Quarks, where the BBC actually asked us to create a new monster. This we did, of course, for *The Dominators*, complete with drawings of the body and the replaceable hands and fitments and so on. However, that's not such a happy period, which is why that story went out under the pseudonym of Norman Ashby.

We designed the Quarks with the intention of having all sorts of add-on tools and weapons which you would be able to buy as a basic kit. The finished version didn't really come up to our expectations. They were a bit laughable, I felt, and didn't have any sort of menace at all. We originally wanted them to have a tremendously innocent child-like voice, yet still have the power to wipe out someone. But that, like many other things in that season, fell by the wayside.

The Dominators was actually commissioned as a six-part story and it was cut to five without any consultation, which made us very annoyed. It was virtually taken over from us, and that was when we parted company with DOCTOR WHO, unfortunately. Also certain people within the BBC claimed that the Quarks were their entire copyright, and the first we knew about this was when we heard that a comic was going to bring out an entire script of the Quarks without our permission. We had no option but to threaten them with an injunction. We then met up with the head of BBC copyright. He took our side completely and I'm afraid he rather hauled the producer and script editor over the coals.

Before all this happened we were actually working on a third Yeti story which would have introduced Jon Pertwee's Doctor and at the same time been Jamie's finale. We were going to take them back to Scotland, and the Intelligence - in preparation for taking on a material form - was going to seal-off, within a force-field, an area of Scotland in which there was a castle. The Laird of the castle would have been from Jamie's clan, and when the old leader (possessed by the Intelligence) finally dies, Jamie has to decide between going on with the Doctor or becoming head of his clan. Being a responsible lad, he would have opted for the latter.

We never got to a treatment, just the storyline stage. After *The Dominators* affair we put it from our minds. I haven't followed DOCTOR WHO a tremendous amount since. I watched some of the Pertwees which I liked very much, and some of the Tom Bakers which I also liked. It then began to get a bit too way out so I haven't watched it for some time.

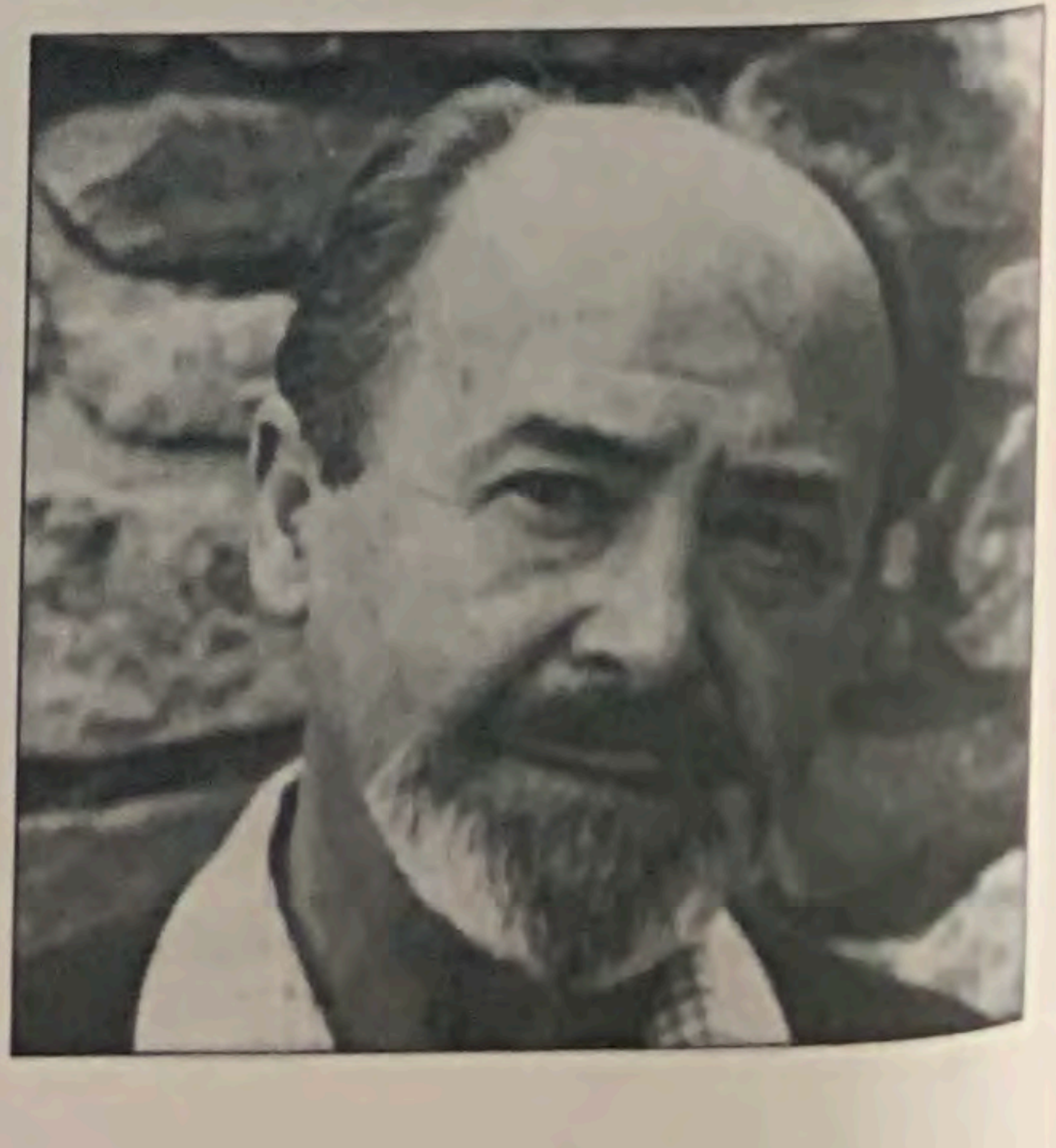
I had said to John Nathan-Turner years ago that if they ever wanted to bring the Yeti back - although probably Henry and I wouldn't write them - we would, I'm sure, both be happy to give our permission for them to be used. As it was they - or rather it - only reappeared for the reunion story (*The Five Doctor, 1983*) for which we were only too happy to give our permission. However the Yeti in that wasn't portrayed very faithfully to either of the originals, but we would assume that, like the Mark.II version, they had progressed!

In hindsight I think both Henry and I would like to have done a few more DOCTOR WHOs, but events didn't work out that wa Since DOCTOR WHO some of my writing credits have includ THE ONEDIN LINE, SUTHERLAND'S LAW, SQUADRON and JAN which was based on *The Daily Mirror* strip cartoon. I also wrote t film *Jane* which had a royal premiere. After I finished fourte years as a script editor at the BBC in 1987 I wrote for several ser which included HOWARD'S WAY. This series, of course, starred t late Maurice Colbourne, whom I'd worked with on THE ONED LINE many years ago, but I didn't realise he had also played a maj villain in DOCTOR WHO. He was an absolutely charming man a his loss hit the production team very badly.

As to my future, well, obviously I do have one or two things the pipeline, but I've been writing long enough to realise that t more you talk about future projects, the more they are likely to di appear - a bit like the TARDIS, really, one moment it's there, t next, it's gone!" ❑

● **Interviewed by Gary Leigh November 1989**

● **Postscript:** *Since this interview I went on to write more episodes* *HOWARD'S WAY - 12 in all. Recently I wrote a piece for the Natur History Unit - MAGPIE IN THE DOCK, very different from my usua work. I've also co-written a book, called Dear Merv...Dear Bill. This i an exchange of letters between two schoolboys during the war. It was ver well-received and ended up with an appearance on Wogan - Wow!*



Some of the projects I was working on in 1989 have come and gone and been replaced by others that are currently looking very hopeful. I've just finished one stage play and have started research for a second, so it may well be, that in returning to the theatre, I will have gone full circle... - ***Mervyn Haisman, January 1994***

1966

the producers

1968

Innes Lloyd

"Bill was in his fifties when he was twenty - he was that sort of man" - May 1986

William Hartnell with WIlliam Hurndall (Ike Clanton) and Sheena Marsh (Kate) in *The Gunfighters* (1966)

“I JOINED the Navy during the war for three years, then I was an actor until 1953. I also wanted to write or direct and it seemed a good idea to try and get into somewhere like the BBC where one would have more chance. I actually like organisation; that's why I wanted to join the Navy, I suppose.

I went for a year to the European Service in radio as a studio man, and then I came across to TV Centre. Eventually I became an OB producer for six or seven years, then I wanted to try some OB drama so I came across and I directed for a year or more. Then John Wiles was leaving Doctor Who and Sydney Newman said, 'I want you to produce Doctor Who'. I said, 'I don't like science fiction at all - in fact, I dislike it intensely!' He said, 'Well, you either produce it or you don't stay!', so I produced it! And then of course I grew to love it, it was great fun. There were a lot of things one learnt from it.

I don't think John Wiles enjoyed it very much, which was one of his reasons for leaving. I think he wanted to get back to writing. I hadn't much time to watch before. I'd seen the odd one. I think I trailed *The Ark* (*1966*) and saw a bit of that being filmed at Ealing. I took over with *The Celestial Toymaker* which was nice, but one wanted to start getting one's own ideas through fairly quickly.

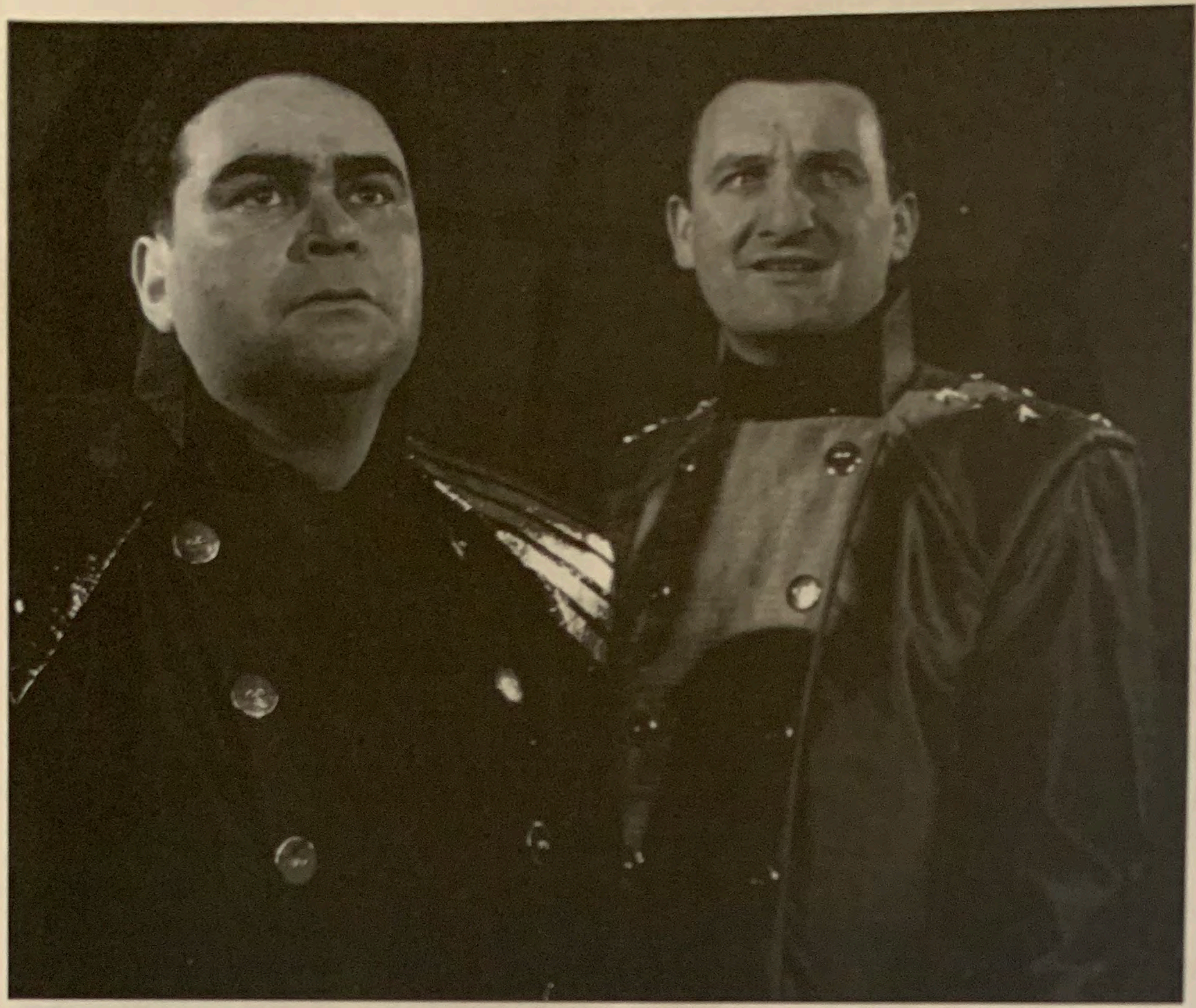
I didn't commission *The Gunfighters* either. It was a very enjoyable one to do but we learnt that we really couldn't do cowboys in the studio, it didn't work! Sydney said, 'Aw, goddamit, that was bloody awful! What the hell are you doing? You need people like *me*!' We may have been losing audiences but we weren't aware of that - we were aware that the programme had a sort of life of its own. One did learn a lot of lessons from *The Gunfighters*, and it was decided that one would be very careful with the sort of scripts one had from then on.

As I didn't like science fiction from the start - it was an area of literature I did not find interesting at all - I felt that the only thing I could do was to try to latch on my own particular interests to it. Kit Pedler I brought in from my old department at Outside Broadcasts. I rang up and asked, 'Do you have any doctors or scientists who have fertile imaginations?', and they said, 'Well, we've got Kit Pedler who's full of ideas like that'. He contributed an awful lot and was a very useful sounding-board.

Gerry Davis, my script editor, and I batted off each other and I enjoyed working with him. When I put him together with Kit they got on awfully well together. To begin with, Kit provided the scientific ideas and Gerry put them into dramatic form. I thought it was a very fulfilling relationship. The Cybermen evolved from a conversation about cybernetic surgery. Most of the time you were in the middle of the production of one and you were also planning the next one coming into bat. If something had worked well you'd try to bring them back three stories or however many later.

William Hartnell was demanding but wonderful, very much like his character in some ways, but I found him a very endearing man once one got to know him. We've all got foibles, and I think all he wanted to do was to make sure that Doctor Who was always right up there, the best. He was very tired. I think he wanted to do 26 episodes rather than 40+ a year. We *all* wanted to do 26, but I don't think we thought of it very much. There were a lot of ideas coming up at the time and we wanted to do them.

He was going to sign the contract and it may have been the thought of doing 40 more that made him suddenly reconsider. He was delighted to have passed it over to Patrick, 'The only man', he said, 'The *only* man in the whole of the British stage who could play the part!' In the studio for the changeover I had Patrick lying at one end and Bill the other. Pat was calling out things like 'Hello Dad', and Bill was saying things like 'The *only* man in the whole of England'! It was fun, actually. I had a party at my flat that night and Bill was very emotional then. It was the close of a chapter and



Gertan Klauber (Ola) and Peter Jeffrey (Pilot) in *The Macra Terror* (1967), the last story from the exclusive team of Gerry Davis and Innes Lloyd

he was very tired. Bill was in his fifties when he was twenty, he was that sort of man, very much a man of his time.

Sad as we were to lose Willie, we were terribly excited that a good actor like Patrick was going to come and join us. It meant that we could do all sorts of things and go off down different avenues. I think once somebody had suggested Patrick, all other names were forgotten. Michael Horden would have had the same sort of qualities as Hartnell, although not personality.

Shaun Sutton at the time was Head of Series. We'd discussed how we'd change the Doctor for a long time. Patrick had done a lot of children's classical stories and we were going to make him a pirate of the skies. We dressed him up, did a make-up test and Sydney came down and said, 'Hey fellas, what are you doing with this guy?' We said, 'This is going to be the new Doctor'.

He said, 'Whaddya mean, the new Doctor? For Chrissake, flop his hair!' I think he was the guy who said, 'Make him a cosmic hobo!' And he was quite right. However, we did try to declown Patrick slightly by taking his trousers in bit by bit, story by story, so he became less and less like the baggy clown in the circus.

DOCTOR WHO was Sydney's own conception. He had very definite ideas, and it was very nice to work on it because you knew that the Head of Drama - who was responsible for Shakespeare and everything else - was enormously interested in this particular series.

He guarded it preciously and it was jolly demanding. It was a sort of privileged position to be in because you actually had to please him. You used to go into meetings with Sydney and he'd say, 'Well, DOCTOR WHO this week was...', and you'd wince, but it kept you on your toes. He was a very innovative man and sparkled with ideas. I disagreed slightly with him in that I didn't think that the historicals worked. I didn't see how they could be educational, except as educational about good and evil.

THERE WAS a sort of added menace to our Dalek stories, certainly in the first one (*The Power of the Daleks, 1966*) where they appeared to be slaves and in actual fact weren't. There was a sort of realistic menace in the idea of them manipulating the whole thing - far more exciting than to just have the Daleks in it. This is the sort of thing we would have talked over to see how we could avoid using them as a sort of cliche, to give them a new life. Every time we did anything again we wanted to put a new gloss on and come in from a different angle. You always tried to do the next one better or differently and invest every one with its own individual quality or character. It's the same with all the films and plays I do now. You obviously don't want to travel down the same road twice so you approach every one differently. You're competing against yourself in a way because you want the next one to hit another mark, a landmark if possible.

The Cybermen, Yeti and any other monsters were created because we needed to change the face of things. We also felt we might lose the Daleks because Terry Nation wanted to take them to America, and we had to have other things to take their place. I was trying to find lots and lots of alternatives to the Daleks during my time.

I think one was always aware of the violence because I had, at the time, very young children. I can be put off very easily watching telly by something that I think is gratuitous, that makes me go 'Ugh!' I *loathe* operations - whenever there is something on PANORAMA about the NHS, they always go into the operating theatre and go for a close-up of the wound, and then I'm totally lost. I think Mary Whitehouse goes to absurd lengths, but there i responsibility. We did have one incident (*The Underwater Men episode one*) with Polly being injected, and I remember some writing, saying, 'You do know all the children have injections Monday morning, don't you?' That was something we sim should not have done, but I did hear from a doctor friend of m that he had several young patients coming in asking *for* injection

I felt there should be nothing violent that they could in any copy. No gore, either, though a good old rough and tumble fi was okay. I mean, hiding behind the couch is alright, actually you're on the edge of the seat wondering what's going to hap next, that's fine. I think there is certain violence, nowadays, wh is unpleasant.

Monochrome is a very good way of making things creepy, one wasn't aware of that at the time - one couldn't wait for colo to arrive! There were all sorts of things we could have done diff ently in colour, it would have been marvellous.

At the time Pauline Collins was very much an up-and-comi actress of great talent, and she declined our offer to stay long than the one story (*The Faceless Ones, 1967*). She had an urbanity there was something about her that would attract a family audien - which we were looking for. She was a very warm person and the Doctor needed warm people around him. You needed to know that when they were together in the TARDIS all was well and you felt at ease..

Frazer Hines was very popular and became enormous chums with Paddy, and then little Debbie. They were three people who got on extremely well and they wanted to be together. If you get the chemistry right all round - from the guy who lights it to the cameraman to the cast - if they all get on then it is enormous fun to be with a crowd like that, who all work hard, know what they're working for and are not too intense about it all. There is a danger, sometimes, that we all take ourselves a bit too seriously.

Towards the end of Patrick's first year I said to Sydney, 'I don't want to do it for more than two years'. You really needed a whole lot of fresh ideas coming in the whole time and you needed to get out before you got so bored that you become complacent and indulgent. You've always got to have that terrible worry of 'Is it going to work?', 'Are the audience going to like it?'...and I think

Michael Craze as Ben (1966). (Right) Peter Purves and Jackie Lane (*The Celestial Toymaker*, 1966)

that once you go in with a 'This is no problem' attitude, then you've had it because you're not tuned up.

Peter Bryant had joined as script-editor around that time and I said we ought to put him into bat for one at least (*The Tomb of the Cybermen*), which I actually commissioned, and I would be somewhere around as a mentor if he needed me. I was delighted to have Peter - who I knew could be trusted to take it on - because you want to leave a legacy of something that's worked. I would have told him, 'Look, you're going to take over, you've probably got some ideas for what you want to do and now is the time to line them up', so I probably wouldn't have commissioned many of the stories which he produced.

My only hope at the time was that it would be sustained, that it would not go on for another season and then go off. It was a legacy given to us by Sydney and so one felt slightly honour-bound to leave it in a reasonably healthy state. I was delighted to be able to get some very good actors in it because then you get all sorts of writers who would be excited to write for them. We had Marius Goring, Peter Barkworth, Peter Jeffrey, Michael Gough and a lot of such people. It's always a good idea, in this game, to get as much good talent into things. We had extraordinarily fine designers, basically as good as anyone in the film business and yet they do it on peanuts and do five times as much. At that time one was thinking more of writers and actors. One shouldn't, I should have thought of the directors too, but it was what was going to be up on the screen - who would be the faces, who would write the scripts. I took it for granted that the directors would do their jobs and that they would do as splendid as they did. It's awful to take anyone for granted.

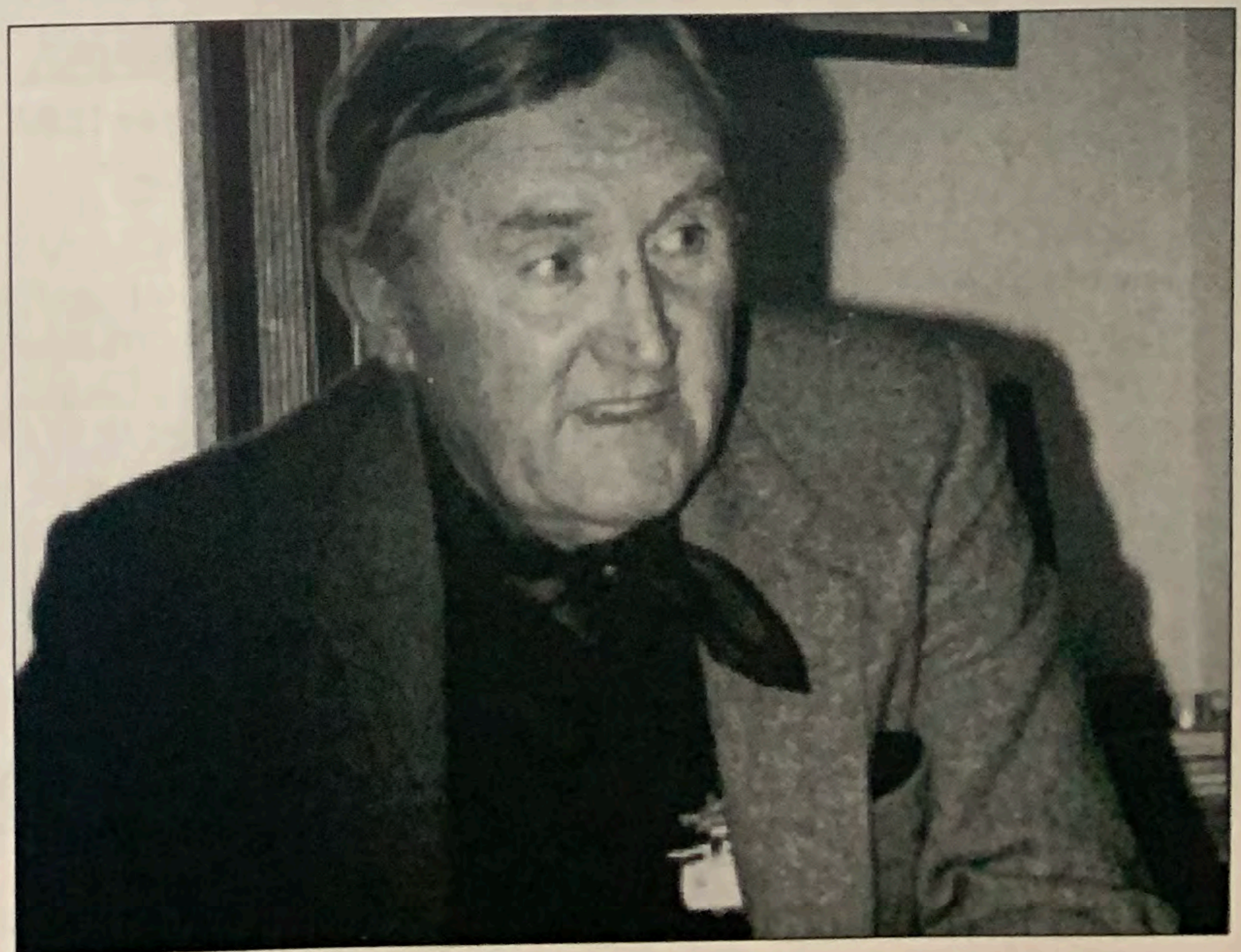
I've caught the odd one since, but I suppose because one has gone on to do a lot of other things one has really not had the time. I feel very guilty! If they make a change I think the BBC would be wise to give it to a real Young Turk to produce and say, 'There's your opportunity'.

I WON a BAFTA award with AN ENGLISHMAN ABROAD and another for GOING GENTLY with Norman Wisdom. Since 1971 I've done about 34 films for the BBC. My own particular interest is in biography, such as SPEED KING about Malcolm Campbell, so it's been a busy time but also a lot of fun. Alan Bennett is enormous fun to work with. He comes in, puts down a script on the desk and says, 'Have a look and see if you like it', and he writes jewels.

DOCTOR WHO was a wonderful training ground for me. I learnt many lessons from it which I have been able to apply since, about all sorts of things. I'm terribly proud of my time as producer of DOCTOR WHO. I took over the baton from Sydney and Verity, who has had a very distinguished career since, and I learnt a lot from it. A huge amount." ❑

- **Interviewed by Tim Collins and Gary Leigh**

- **Postscript:** *Innes Lloyd passed away on August 23rd 1991.*



1967 the companions 1968

Deborah Watling

"Someone, somewhere, has got the whole of my era - I *know* *it!"* **- June 1991**

"PAT HICKS, my mother, was also an actress before she married my father, Jack, after which she concentrated on the family. As well as my father, my elder sister, Dilys, and my brother Giles are also actors. The autumn crocus in the family is Nicola. She started to go into the theatre, then she got married and had kids, but she keeps her hand in in case she wants to get back full time.

My father really wanted one of his children, if not all, to be something 'sensible', like a doctor. Of course none of us did, but if you grow up in an acting family you think that's the norm. I didn't think there was anything different in dad going to the studios where my friends' fathers went to the office.

My first television role was in H. G. WELLS' INVISIBLE MAN in 1957 at the age of ten. We did a walkabout around London, I think for publicity - a ten-year old girl walking around with a man with no head - I thought it was the funniest thing ever, I couldn't stop giggling!

***The Abominable Snowmen* (1967)**

I had a week out and they needed a young girl for WILLIAM TELL, which they were doing in the next studio, and they said, 'Let's lift Deborah Watling from THE INVISIBLE MAN for this week', which they did. I was in THE INVISIBLE MAN for about a year. I was very young but I got off school, which was terrific. I had two chaperons who gave me two hours of lessons a day, which of course I hated. I always hated school! All the prop men were on my side, though, and when it was time to be tutored they used to hide me in the skips so these poor women couldn't find me! I went through three chaperons - one left and two had nervous breakdowns. I was a minx!

I did a few more TVs, then Alice in THE LIFE OF LEWIS CARROLL was my first major one at seventeen. In fact it was one of my first TV's after leaving school at sixteen, and I hadn't got an agent. Dilys and my father each had their own agents and they both assumed I would go on to their books, and without telling me they both put me up for Alice! When I got the part their agents engaged in a terrible fight, each claiming, 'She's mine', 'No, she's mine'...and I said 'Oh, my goodness, I don't like this at all', so I didn't go with either of them. I've still got a framed copy of *Radio Times* with me on the cover! It was in black and white in those days an I'm rather proud of that.

In 1966 I did an episode OUT OF THE UNKNOWN (T *World in Silence*) with Ma Eden. I played the seco lead, Sarah Richards, who w quite an advanced pupil tak over by a machine and these strange words came o of my mouth. I don't kno how I did it because I had at the time and I only ha couple of days to rehearse these technical terms. I do think I could do it now.

I was a new young face a flavour of the month for qu some time. It was a terrib busy time, but I enjoyed eve minute of it. Around that tim I think I saw Innes Lloy about the part of Polly, but he thought I was too young. I kno there was a year's break and then we got back together again, and I said, 'Yes, I think I'm ready now', and he said, 'Yes, I think you are, so do Victoria'!

The Evil of the Daleks (1967)...

People say it was grand, but I wasn't aware of it at the time. I do recall that the frocks were lovely and the atmosphere was terrific. There was something there, but I wouldn't say in opulence.

I remember it so well. Gosh, it's all coming back! It was my first shoot with Frazer Hines and he was rescuing me from the Dalek down this long corridor. He grabs me and his first immortal line to me is, 'Quick, Miss Waterfield, up your back passage!' I was very naive and I said, 'Ooh, you can't say that', and I called out '*Cut!*'. Derek Martinus, the director, said, 'What's wrong with up your back passage?' Frazer looked at me and I looked at him and we got the giggles and just fell about laughing, and we've been friends ever since! I think it was changed to 'Up your passage', but even that was bad, I thought.

I shall tell you a secret now. I have a thing about charity shops. I actually refuse, even if I could afford to, to spend the money on frocks that stores are charging these days. I've got so many antique frocks out of charity shops, particularly Victorian frocks and even Victorian furniture. That's my era, I love it, so maybe 'she's' still about!

The Tomb of the Cybermen...

The creepiest thing was this take when we walked through that great door, this arch or whatever it was, and they were all behind this plastic which was supposed to be ice. As we passed, one of them slightly twitched and moved and that sent a shiver down my spine, and when they actually burst out of their tombs was very creepy. I think the designs for the Cybermen then were very basic, not fussy, and it worked. Nowadays the design detracts from the actual monster you're trying to create.

Deborah Watling as Alice, with John Sanders, Peter Bartlett and John Bailey (16th September 1965)

Being made in black and white enhanced it. In colour it looks plastic. All right, our sets wobbled sometimes, but my god did we create an atmosphere.

The Abominable Snowmen...

It was I who suggested my father for the part of Jack Travers, and he was very pleased and proud of me! We got the storyline for the next story half way through the one we were doing, I flicked through it and thought, 'Cor, Professor Travers, dad could play that with a bit of make-up', so I suggested him to Innes who thought it was a brilliant idea. He was out of work at the time and I phoned him in the lunchtime break and said, 'Dad, do you fancy working with me for six weeks?' 'Debbie, I'd love to', he said. 'Good, because there's this brilliant role in DOCTOR WHO called Professor Travers. You'll have to stick a beard on and go a bit white or whatever to age up'...and he says to people, even to this day, 'The only person who's ever got me a job in the family is Debs!' He's ever so proud of that and we had a great time (of course now, if he played Professor Travers, I tease him by telling him he wouldn't need any make-up!).

The Ice Warriors...

They put up this wonderful polystyrene cave which was meant to be ice (shooting in black and white you could get away with it). The Ice Warrior suits were made of rubber with these sort of plastic eyes which you looked out of. Of course the actors got terribly hot inside these rubber suits and the plastic steamed up and they couldn't see a thing! In this particular scene I was meant to be captured and dragged as a prisoner into this ice cave, but after five minutes Bernie (*Bresslaw*) said to Derek, 'I can't see in this thing - I'm all steamed up!'

I suggested that, instead of being dragged, I should be pushed into the caves and I would whisper out of the corner of my mouth 'left, right, etc.', and Derek agreed. We got to the caves and I'm going 'left, right...', and then I said 'right' and he went left straight through the wall, totally demolishing the set! We were buried underneath all this polystyrene and Bernie couldn't get up because of his huge suit, and of course I emerged to see all the prop mens' faces thinking, 'Oh my god, we'll have to build it all again!' Well, of course I got the giggles!

When I watched the four episodes that turned up a few years ago it took me right back in time.

Around the grounds of Grims Dyke in May 1967 (*The Evil of the Daleks*)

A 1971 publicity shot

I knew what was going to happen before it happened and we're talking about 24 years ago! Someone, somewhere has got the whole of my era - I *know* it!

I had a week off during *The Enemy of the World*. Yes, one week's holiday a year is pretty good!

In *The Web of Fear* (*1968*) there was a scene I wasn't in, because I'd been captured yet again by the Yeti. Pat, Frazer and my father had to go along the mock-up of the Tube line wondering where I was, and all of a sudden Frazer stops, looks down and says, 'Ah, look', and picks up a handkerchief: 'Victoria must have come this way'. Pat says, 'Yes, it's Victoria's handkerchief', and Professor Travis says, 'Let's go and find her'. After rehearsing it they went for a take while I was watching. Frazer stops and says, 'Look', and he picks up a pair of knickers. 'These are Victoria's, she must have gone this way!' Pat takes them and goes straight up to camera and says, 'Yes, they are aren't they, yes, she must', and my father grabs them and asks, 'How do you know they're hers?', and the studio erupted!

Fury from the Deep had very good atmosphere. You didn't see much of the monster for about four episodes, although you knew it was there because of the pulse-like beat. I thought it was terrific. Wouldn't it frighten the kids of today if they saw it!

I didn't want to do the following year, I wanted to go to the Royal Theatre, which I thought was the right decision. They wouldn't give me scripts to do any more with the character so I thought, 'No, I've got to do something else'.

When we got to my last scene, where I was left on Earth and Pat and Frazer were saying goodbye to me, they were literally crying, they couldn't get anything out. If anyone has got that episode, those are *real* tears from all of us - absolutely shattering!

I thought I'd got out in time but I hadn't, but I had made a bit of money so I thought I'd open a boutique as a sideline. However it was just over the peak boom period of the boutique era in the late Sixties and I lost my shirt. All the money I'd earnt on Doctor Who - everything - was gone, but I thought at least I'd had a go and was positive about it. Soon after, however, I got the call saying I'd got the part in *That'll Be The Day*. I was told to go to the dance centre because I had to learn to jive properly. David Essex and Ringo Starr were there and I thought, 'Well, I've made it!' They were legends to me. Then I got the Cliff Richard movie, *Take Me High*, which was really nice, but it didn't work. Half way through filming I thought, 'This film is going to be dreadful'. I think everybody knew it but didn't say.

Then I did lots of television, including The Newcomers, The Power Game, Danger UXB and Rising Damp. I was asked to do *The Five Doctors* (*1983*) but I was doing a Dave Allen show so I couldn't do it. I'd love to have done it, it's been a large part of my life and I'm very grateful for it and I loved my time on Who. Ironically The Dave Allen Show was cancelled because he wasn't very well and so I lost out on both.

Lately I've been doing a lot of theatre work, but I desperately want to get back on the box now. I was cast for a series just before Christmas but the Beeb shelved it. I had the second lead in it. I want to get into situation comedy. It can be a very, very tacky area, and of course I wouldn't do absolute rubbish, but at the moment - because I want to get my foot in that door - if it was half-way decent I think I'd do it.

I love conventions. The American ones are certainly different; usually when you step off that plane it's straight in to meet t organisers after travelling for God knows how many hours. You absolutely shattered and you go through the first day not knowi where you are and you're trying to do your bit but you don't g off your best. American conventions do tend to be rather lavi but with the UK events it's nice to meet mates as well. Every ti I go into a convention I get the most wonderful, warm welcom I'm amazed they still remember me as Victoria!" ❑

The Emperor throne room recreated for the anniversary documentary Thirty Years in the TARDIS

● **Interviewed by Gary Leigh**

Menaced by an Ice Warrior at the opening of the MOMI Doctor Who exhibition (July 1991)

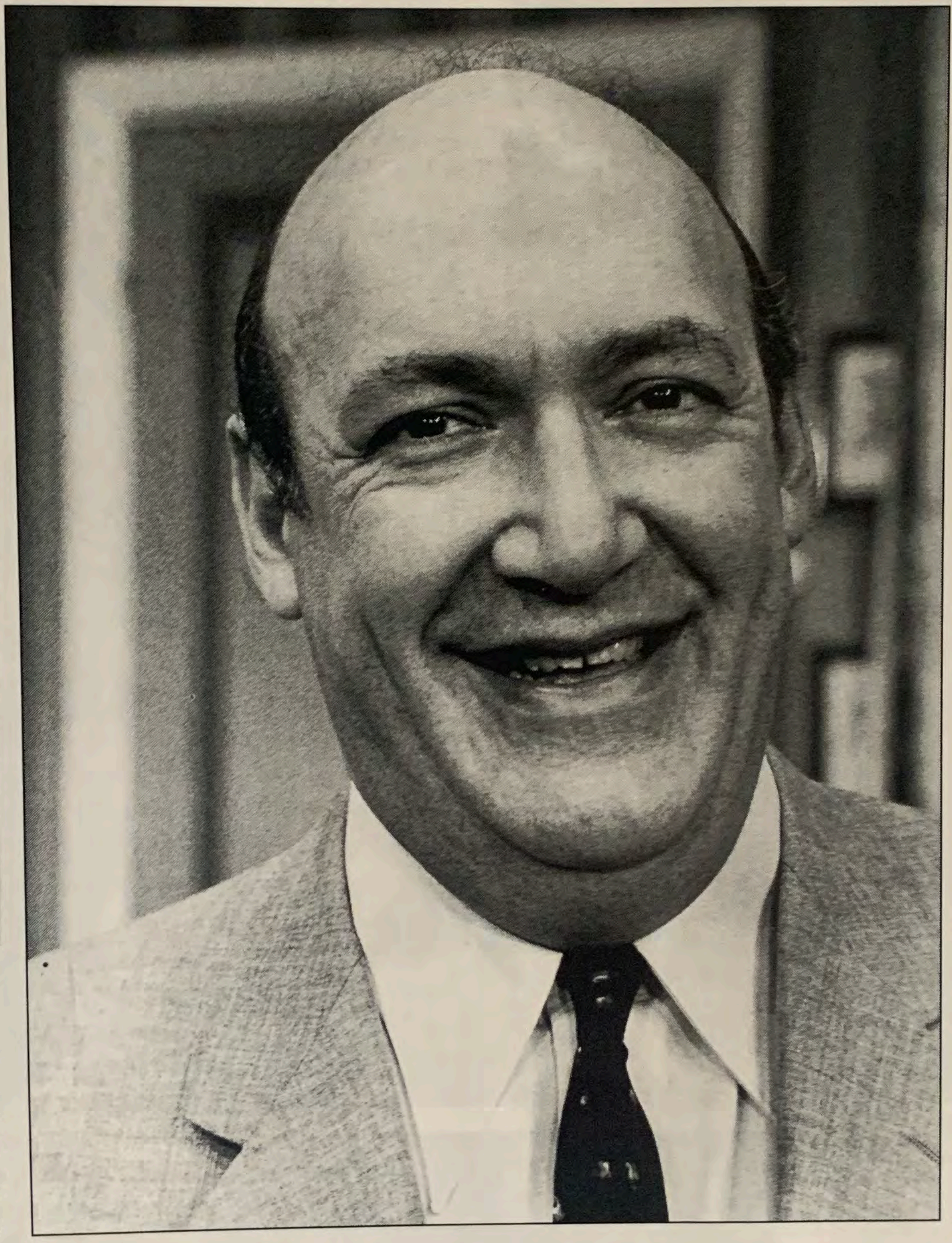
● **Postscript:** *Since June 1991, I did a long tour of Murder By Misadventure playing Gerald Harper's wife, then I directed a couple of comedies in Frinton Rep. After this I went to the Far East with Terry Scott, playing his wife for nine weeks! Next I opened in the West End in Alfie opposite Adam Faith, playing 'the mature woman in his life - Randy Ruby!' - then I directed two thrillers at Frinton Rep. I've just finished in the West End playing the lead in a farce called Don't Dress For Dinner. - Deborah Watling, February 1994*

1967

the monsters

Bernard Bresslaw

"I was the definitive Ice Warrior" - November 1987



"I WAS approached to do DOCTOR WHO whilst I was at the Edinburgh Festival in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with a phonecall from the director Derek Martinus. I hadn't worked with him before so he introduced himself and explained he was looking for somebody to appear in the next DOCTOR WHO story (*The Ice Warriors, 1967*). As I am six foot and seven inches tall he thought I had the build to carry off the role - these aliens from Mars. The way he described the part was very attractive so I was sent the script and I quite liked it. The decisive factor really was that I had two young sons that were absolute DOCTOR WHO fans so they were really thrilled when I told them!

Doing DOCTOR WHO in the Sixties was very different from doing, say, a *Carry On...*, which I was also doing at that time. DOCTOR WHO is a continuing series and it was done more or less in sequence, depending on what sets were up, etc. In films you can start at the end of a film, do the beginning and finish with the middle bit. You do get a greater sense of continuity in television and to that extent you can do it almost as a play. The greatest challenge of my DOCTOR WHO was that I was the first Ice Warrior, therefore I was the definitive one. It was a very stimulating challenge for me because when you are doing, for example, the *Carry Ons*, the characters were all very recognisable, so you didn't have that problem of trying to create an alien from scratch.

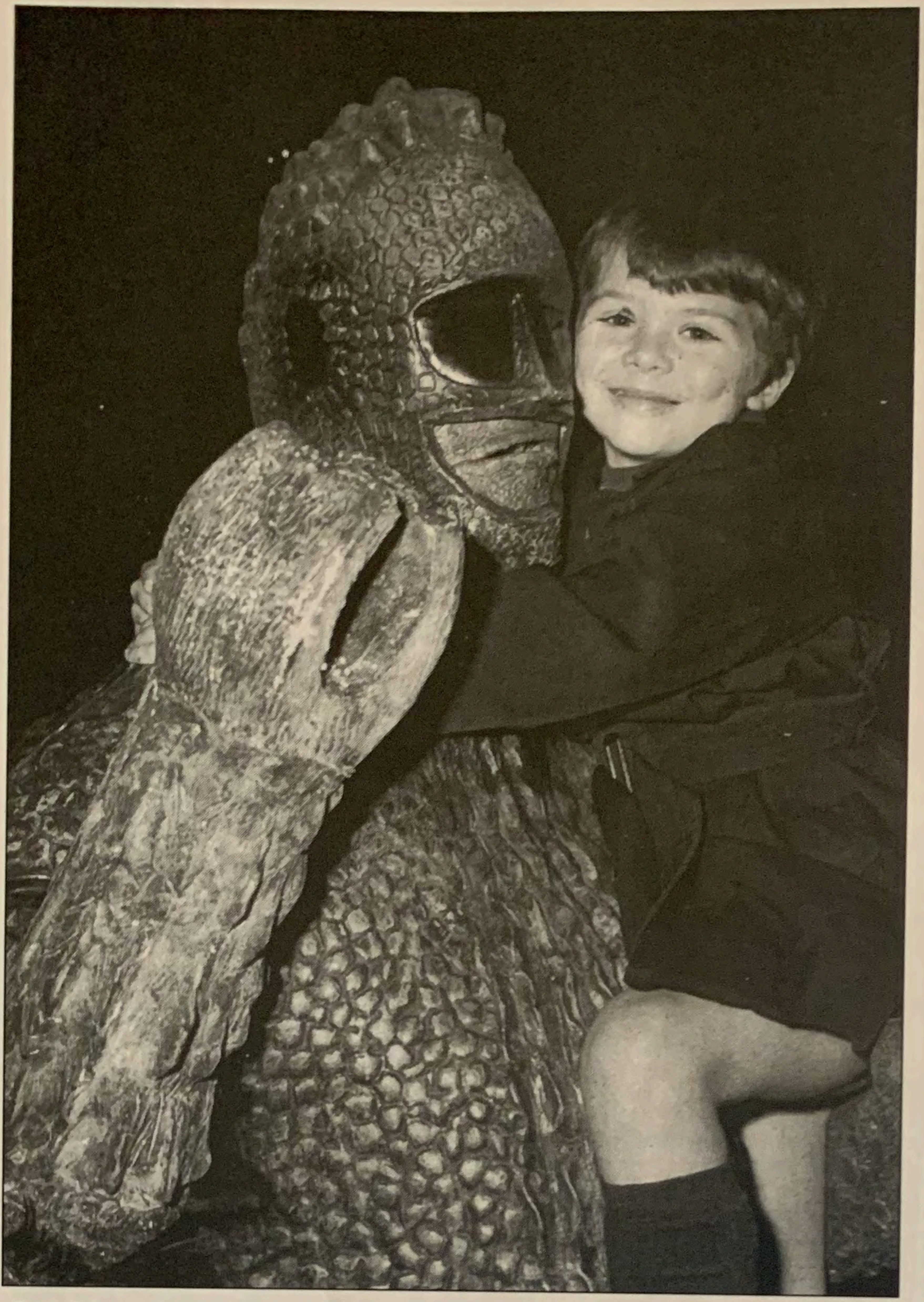
I remember having to work without my glasses — I'm very short sighted — and I had to perform in a very cumbersome costume, albeit a very effective one. I had problems with manoeuverability so it caused great problems on the set. At the end of the show, where I was to get my come-uppance, I was expected to fall over and I said, 'No I can't fall over, it's impossible!' In that costume I hadn't got the mobility of a normal person, so they had to resort to camera tricks to get rid of me. At one point I had to carry Debbie Watling, which wasn't easy when you are encased in fibreglass, leather and plastic!

I have to say I enjoyed working with Patrick Troughton enormously. I had worked with him before so we were known to one another. It is always difficult for an actor coming into a series in which there are regulars; I was very aware of this when I was doing my own regular television shows. I always went out of my way to try and make people feel part of it, but you really do become absorbed after a while. Patrick was always very flattering and very helpful and we very much enjoyed working with each other. The team spirit was wonderful, plus you really did feel you were making it for an audience that really appreciated what you were doing. It really was a phase that I enjoyed as much as anything I've ever done on television.

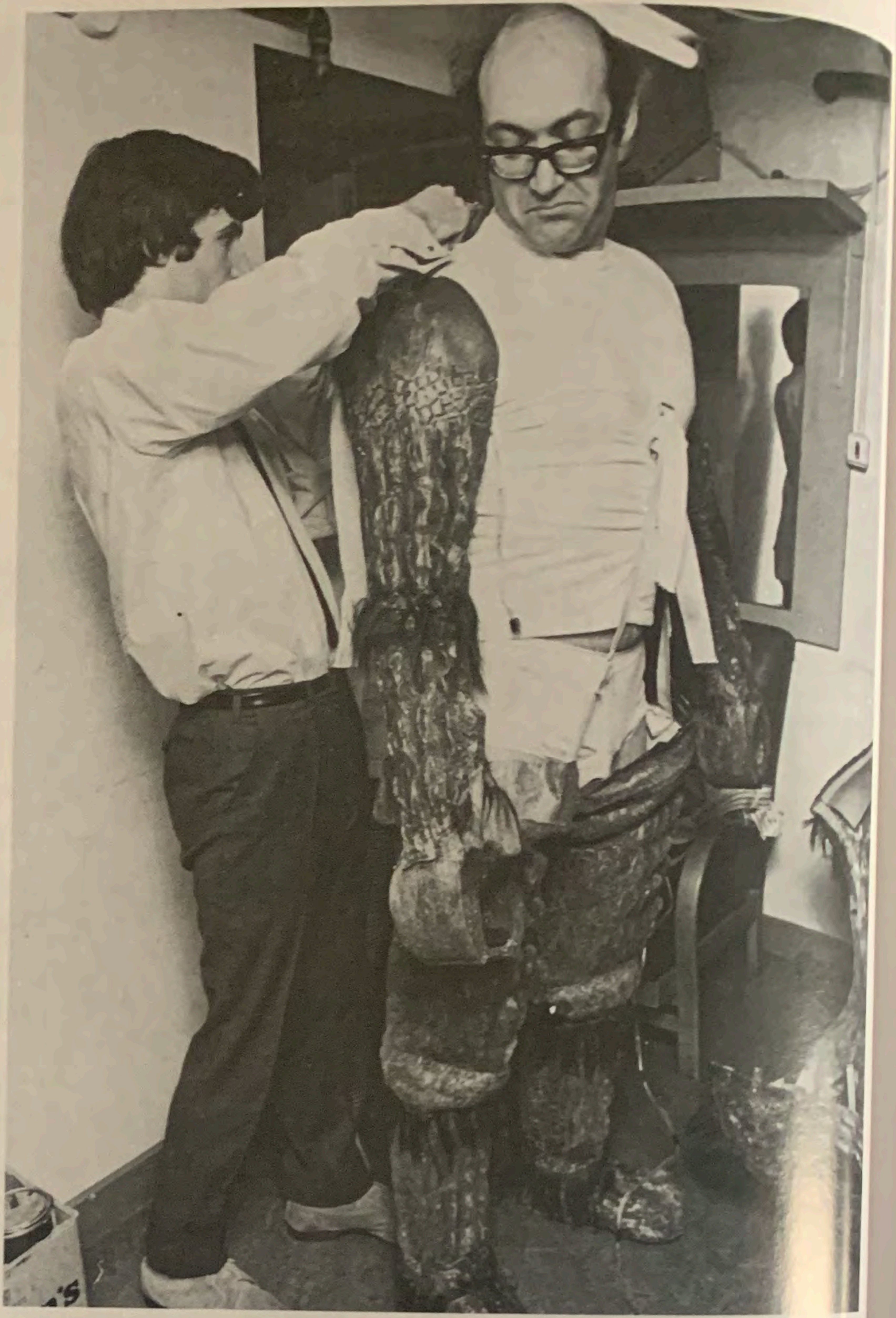
One of the reasons the Ice Warriors were so successful is that the scripts were good and they didn't rely on electronic effects entirely for their success. That is the secret of good science fiction; imagination first, technicalities second. Our scripts were very well put together — although the Ice Warriors were not human, they were able to display certain characteristics which an audience could identify with and get caught up in.

I believe there are certain disadvantages to the colour episodes of today. I do like science fiction, and I can not help thinking that some of the best science fiction films have been in black and white. It is the imagination which is more important than the electronics. Another sphere in which black and white scores heavily is horror - I don't think there will ever be another Boris Karloff Frankenstein; the mood and atmosphere created in that film was sensational and it is difficult to conceive improving that with colour. Colour is lovely but not entirely natural on screen - technicolor has an artificial quality about it. In a funny way black and white has certain advantages when you' re looking for atmosphere.

It is a great regret to me that my episodes no longer exist (*sic*). I have photographs from it so I do have tangible memories if you like, but it's a great pity they didn't hang on to some of the tapes. It is remarkable how popular the Ice Warriors became — they are



Outside TV centre with son James, 7, for a press call on the eve of episode one of *The Ice Warriors* (1967)



Undergoing the transformation from *Carry On* star to gr [illegible] Martian, care of costume designer Martin Baugh

one of DOCTOR WHO's most popular opponents!

As for the recent decline of DOCTOR WHO, I don't know whether the BBC should kill it off or not. If there is sufficient imagination among writers, producers and directors to keep pulling the rabbit out of the hat as it were, then okay, but just to continue it because it has always been there would be a mistake. If you run out of imagination and ideas there is no point in carrying on with it, but if you continue giving it quality then yes. If not it is better to leave people with happy memories.

To this day I get mail from all over the world concerning my role in DOCTOR WHO, even more so than for THE ARMY GAME and some of the other television stuff I've done. I'm always getting asked to the conventions, and recently I was up in Scotland and was asked by the fans up there to be in a video they were making, which I was delighted to do. I always find it a pleasure talking to DOCTOR WHO fans — they are polite and articulate and always have a vast knowledge of the programme." ❑

● **Interviewed by Robert Cope**

● **Postscript:** *Shortly after this interview appeared in DWB50 - conducted twenty years to the day when episode one of The Ice Warriors was broadcast - Bernard wrote: 'I enjoyed reading the interview and particularly valued seeing the photos of myself in the process of being made-up. T [illegible] hole thing made a timely reminder of a most enjoyable engagement.'*

His original version of one of DOCTOR WHO's most popular an [illegible] uring monsters was just the tip of a rich career which spanned so [illegible] rty years and encompassed every facet of showbusiness, although he i [illegible] aps remembered first and foremost for his regular appearances in t [illegible] rry Ons. It was, perhaps, fortunate that he declined to appear in [illegible] ost recent entry into the canon, the criticall [illegible] ned Carry On Columbus (1992), becaus [illegible] as during his return to his love of Shakespe [illegible] in a Regent's Park production of The Ta [illegible] of the Shrew - that he suffered a fatal hear [illegible] ck whilst waiting for the curtain to rise on th [illegible] 1th June 1993 performance. He was 59.

My recollections of Bernard are on a more personal level. As a fan of the Carry Ons I regularly corresponded with him, and he always found the time to answer my letters and queries. He was particularly overjoyed when I was able to arrange to have sent to him video copies of some of the Carry On... specials from the late Sixties.

I last saw him in the Blackpool revue in 1992 - his 6' 7" frame lending itself fittingly to his stereotyped interpretation of a Blackpool landlady! - where he greeted me in the warm and gentlemanly mánner that had long since earned him the tag of 'the gentle giant' in showbiz circles. Needless to say, he is greatly missed. -
Robert Cope, February 1994

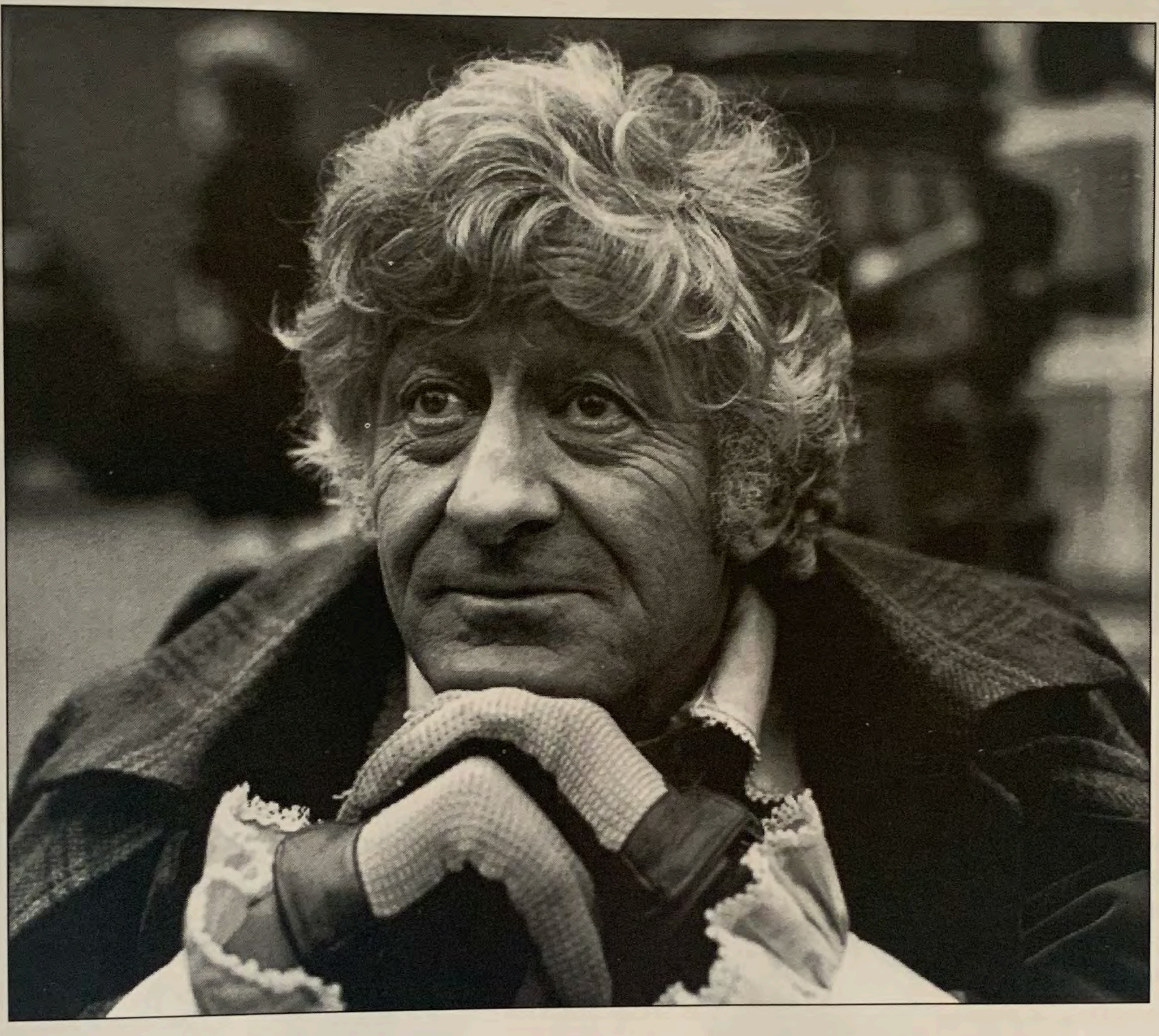
1970

the doctors

1974

Jon Pertwee

"I hate giving autographs - what is personal about scribbling on a piece of paper?" - December 1989



● *Strong language*

"I was in Naval intelligence during the war and they sent me down to see a radio show that Lieutenant Eric Barker was doing (it was supposed to be insulting to leading figures in the Government and I was sent to put a stop to any risque jokes). So I sat in the auditorium and Eric said, 'I want somebody to shout out these lines', so I said 'I'll do it!', and he looked at me and said 'Who are you?', and I said 'I'm a spy!' I told him that I'd been sent to check up on him but if he let me say the lines I'd be a very bad spy, so he let me say the lines! The lines were 'Leave him alone, you're always picking on him, the poor perisher', and Eric's actress wife Pearl Hackney would walk in and say 'Who's that?', to which Eric would reply 'That's the Minister of Education' (who was a cockney at the time). It was precisely the sort of joke I was supposed to stop!

After this Eric asked me if I wanted to go back the following week, which I did, and that was my big break in showbusiness. That was my stepping stone from straight theatre to light radio, which was all important then. I stayed with Eric for eight or nine years after that. We bought the rights to the show *Mediterranean Merry Go Round* and there were three versions for Army, Navy and Airforce. The Airforce one became *Much Binding In The Marsh*, the Army version became *Stand Easy* with Charlie Chester and we became *Waterlogged Spa*, in which I played a postman which was a version of the Worzel character you hear now.

Much later we did *The Navy Lark* and I asked for two names alongside myself to appear, as I'm a great believer in teams, and we got, originally, Leslie Phillips and myself and we took it in turns to top the bill each week. My voice man was a man you've never heard of since by the name of Ronnie Barker! Michael Bates, Richard Caldicot and Heather Chasen were all beginners in radio and part of my team, and Ronnie left after a while because he hadn't the time to keep doing it. He was becoming much too important in the business.

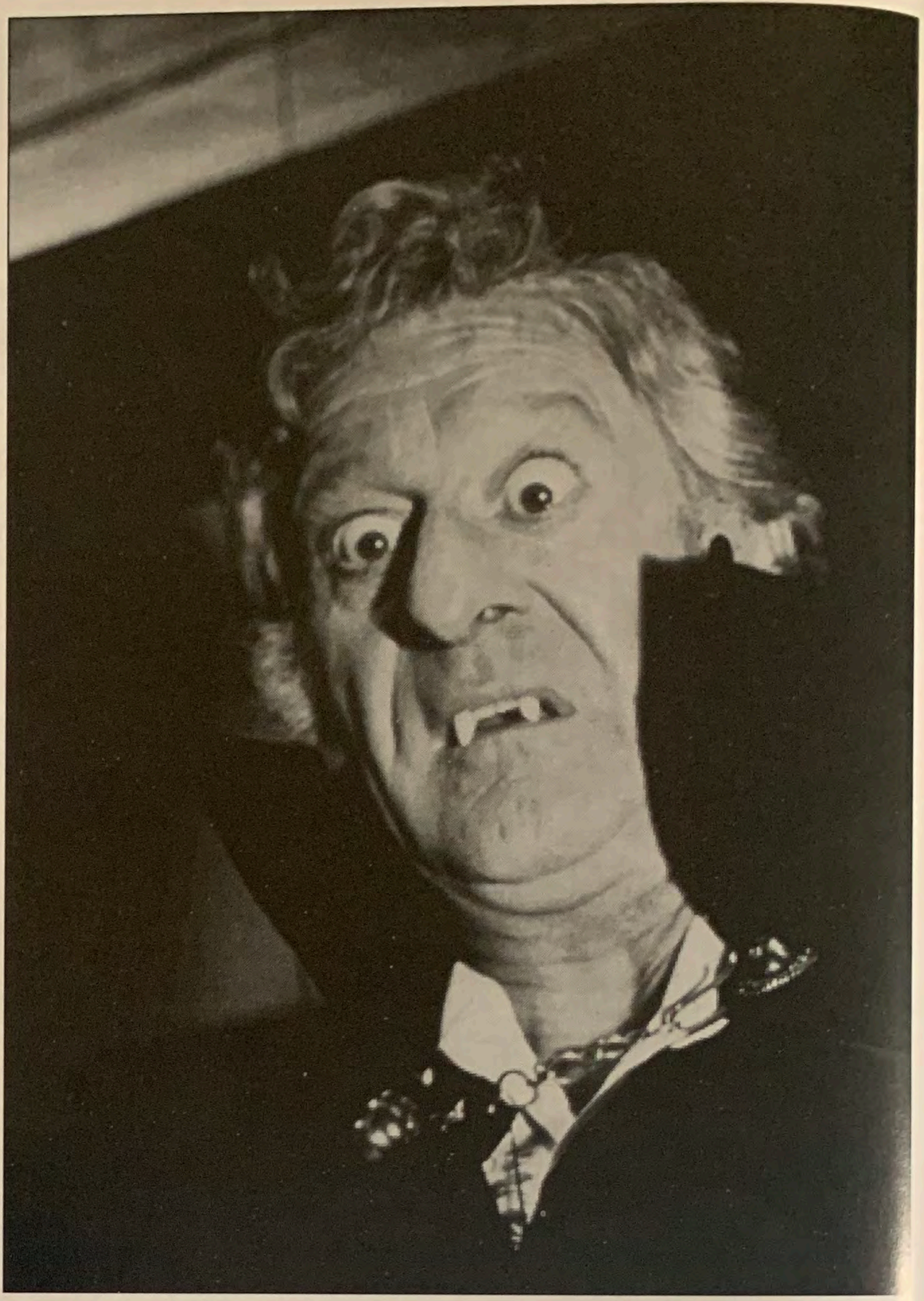
Later, when I was in New York doing *There's A Girl In My Soup* on Broadway, I was asked to do a show in England about the Home Guard (I'd already done a television show called Beggar My Neighbour playing a bank manager). They wanted to base this series around this bank manager who was in charge of a military unit, and there was a terrible tizzy because they complained that they'd told me ages ago that they wanted me for it and now I was unavailable. That was a show called Dad's Army which Arthur Lowe went on to do quite brilliantly. Anyway, they said either stay on Broadway or come back to do Dad's Army, and I said I'd rather stay on Broadway, thank you. But if I'd have done Dad's Army I'd never have done Doctor Who! I came back from America and virtually went straight into Doctor Who (I'd been married to Jean Marsh and I'd watched her episodes). Ron Moody was the first choice for the Third Doctor before me. I put myself up for the part through my agent.

In a break with your foremost reputation as a comedy actor you played the role totally seriously, although later on you incorporated a few comic touches into the Doctor, like dressing up as a char lady (The Green Death, 1973).

That was only for a bit of fun. Mike (*Briant*) and I were great friends so he indulged me in bits of comedy.

Are press claims that Michael Grade has axed any further Worzel Gummidge series from Channel 4 true?

He cancels *everything* - Doctor Who and Worzel! He says he doesn't like children's programmes and he doesn't understand



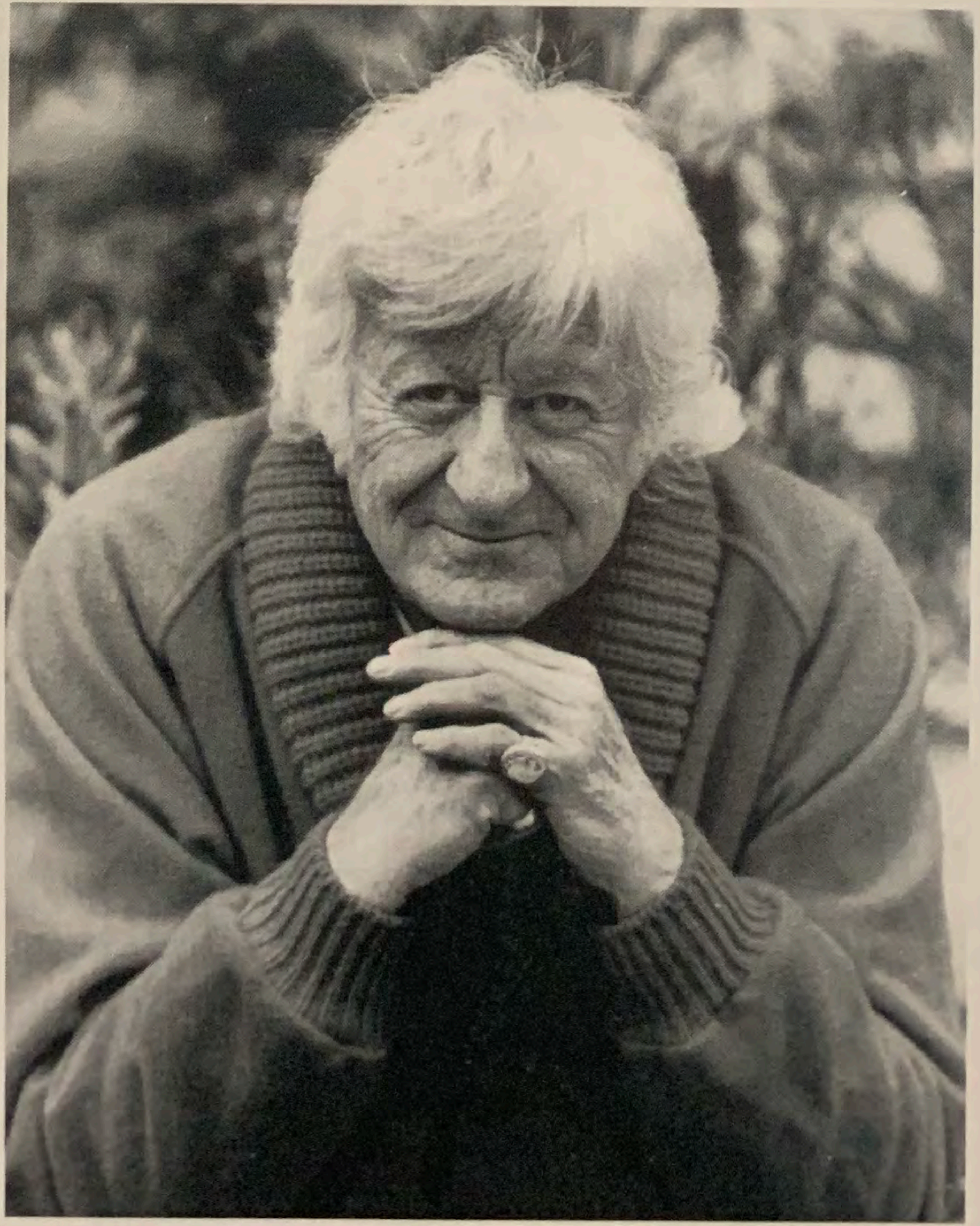
The many faces of Jon Pertwee: Worzel Gummidge and *The House That Dripped Blood* (1970)

them so why should he be responsible for them?!

I've had a fight with Worzel Gummidge ever since it started, though God knows what I'm fighting for - it had one of the biggest viewing figures for a children's series; the best press you've ever read in your life; we missed the BAFTA award by half a point for five years running, and that was only skulduggery. Something like The Book Tower (*presented by Tom Baker*) got it.

The ITV strike held us up at the time of the first series and our company - the now defunct Southern Television - were in a ghastly mess all the time. I was contracted to do thirteen episodes for that first series where in fact we only did eight. Then there was the series that was cancelled in its entirety, we had problems all along. When they took it off a few years ago, the *Star* newspaper ran that big 'Bring back Worzel Gummidge' campaign, and they received 400,000 requests for stickers!

I can put my finger on why nobody wants to take it up. Southern Television lost their franchise because they didn't abide by IBA ruling and let people buy shares in their company (which, I gather, is a rigid rule), and the vast amount of money they made went into financing garages and not back into the company. So they lost their franchise, which is a pi because they'd have done far better by bringing in anothe company to join them like when ATV became Central. Eventuall the franchise went to TVS who said they were going to take u Worzel Gummidge along with three other series, but when came down to it they couldn't becau of finance.



So then I went looking for anoth producer and I met James Mitchel who made The Irish RM, and w negotiated with him for months an months and months - he was terribl slow - and eventually we were going t Ireland with it. Keith and Willi changed all the scripts to utilise Iris character actors, but just five day before shooting began they cancelle the entire series! James Mitchell's team had fallen out with HTV (who were part-financing the project) because one of Mitchell's team had said something about the inefficiency of HTV in America (it was probably perfectly true but he shouldn't have said it), so Lord Harlech said 'Stuff it, cancel the whole thing'. So I was paid off for thirteen programmes with a yawning gap of two years ahead of me without any work.

That was the sort of thing running throughout the history of it and during this time we were picking up awards all over the place! In the end I had to go out to New Zealand to film it, and when you get there you can't find the actors or the locations. But we have done some good ones out there; the production values are good but it doesn't have the same gentleness.

So what is the future for Worzel Gummidge?

I shouldn't think there is one. We've been making Worzel Gummidge - off and on - for ten years now. A big American company called PrimeTime have bought all the previous Worzel Gummidges that were made by Southern Television and now they're negotiating with Graham McClean's production company for the Down Under ones, so they'll all go together in a package and, as I understand it, PrimeTime are interested in putting up the money for a further series to be made. It plays in Australia, Germany and Spain, etc., but it's never been pushed or promoted properly.

Jon Pertwee is introduced to the press - on 27th June 1969 - as the new Doctor Who, originally to have debuted in a Yeti adventure set in Scotland

We don't think of it as a children's series because 75% of our viewers are adult. We call it a family series. There's a tremendous amount of morality too. The Crowman is God - we call him a creator - but if you listen to what he is saying the Crowman is actually preaching Christianity, although in New Zealand we were rather losing touch and bad people were coming out on top. Aunt Sally, in two of the Down Under series, walks away and gets away with it which we normally don't do; she usually gets her comeuppance or Worzel deserves it because he's been stupid. Also, in a couple of the stories they're a bit heavy at the end. In one, Aunt Sally actually goes off with a human who falls in love with her, and if you think about it the only thing he's going to get for his trouble is a splinter in his private parts! It's ridiculous to go that far - the Crowman should have turned up and put a stop to things. So there have been a couple of errors because James Hill didn't direct the last series - the first he's missed!

Are you aware that James Hill was once involved in a movie project with Tom Baker and Ian Marter called 'Doctor Who Meets Scratchman'?

No, I didn't know that. The current plans for a Doctor Who movie have been going on for bloody years! We were all very disappointed that they were not going to consider any of us for it but they obviously wanted an international name. When I heard John Cleese was apparently going to play it I thought it was a bad idea, but he could have carried it off. Then I heard the rumour about Dudley Moore and I abandoned ship altogether! I've always thought the whole project was a phoney myself.

> *"The current plans for a Doctor Who movie have been going on for bloody years! We were all very disappointed that they were not going to consider any of us for it but they obviously wanted an international name"*

I once decided it wasn't a difficult thing to write a Doctor Who story, so an American actor/writer friend of mine, called Reed de Rouen, and I got together and wrote an absolutely magnificent story which was very original and took place in the snows of the Arctic. We gave it to Barry Letts and Terrance Dicks who said 'Fantastic, absolutely marvellous...but no'. We asked why not and they said it was not Doctor Who's format. It was very true because Doctor Who's format is, in fact, very, very complicated. You set up a scene and then the Doctor appears and each scene links up to another until they all come together in a nut at the end, which we did not do. We wrote it as a full script with a beggining, middle and an end. It would have looked completely out of synch with the other stories. It must have been around the mid-Seventies.

It was rumoured recently that Terrance Dicks might be taking over from John Nathan-Turner as producer of Doctor Who.

Yes, but now JN-T is staying on for some reason.

Do you think no-one else wants to produce Doctor Who now?

I think you are absolutely right, yes. It's the same with Worzel Gummidge; TV companies say 'When can we have some more Worzel?', and I say 'Will you come and produce it then?', and they say 'Oh no, we'll market it and distribute it but we don't want to produce it'. I couldn't understand this until I sat down and thought about it. If you are a new producer making Worzel Gummidge, nobody is going to come up and congratulate you because it was already a success, but if, on the other hand, it is not as good they'll all say 'They're not as good as the old ones'. So you've got everything to lose and nothing to win. That is the reason we had a problem getting a producer with a potential viewership of ten million people.

It's the same with Doctor Who. I was lunching with Verity Lambert the other day and she expressed a desire to go back to Doctor Who to make it what it was, because the whole thing is her baby.

Did you enjoy the recent NFT Doctor Who event?

Yes, very much. I watched the first episode of *The Sea Devils* (1972). I was standing at the back and I thought 'By Jesus, this is good'! It was taut, modern, and nothing was silly. The scenes with the Master were good and the fellow playing the Governor (*Clive Morton*) was splendid. Did you know the shot of Katy (*Manning*)

The recently wed Jean Marsh and Jon Pertwee relax at their basement flat in Chelsea (3rd April 1956). Their marriage lasted several months

(Right) Jean went on to appear in 20 episodes of DOCTOR WHO, her most prominent role being companion Sara Kingdom in the 12-part *The Daleks' Master Plan* (1965/66)

going up the ladder was actually Stuart Fell? That's the reason he was waggling his arse all the time! When I was going up behind him I said, 'Stuart, keep your arse still', and he said 'Well, I'm a girl', so I said 'Girls *don't* waggle their arses going up ladders!'

Katy was a very unique lady. She used to say to me 'I'm never going to act on the stage' and 'I'm never going to get married, unless it's to you!' Now here she is working regularly in the theatre with a couple of kids! I always phone Nick (*Courtney*) and ask him who to vote for in the Equity election, though I'm not a union man at all. I don't like anything the Redgraves stand for - we're actors, not revolutionaries.

Is there going to be a second volume of your autobiography, Moon Boots and Dinner Suits?

It's interesting you should ask that. I had lunch the other week with a publisher who wants me to do one. I'm a very commercially-minded man and the state of the British publishing industry is appalling. I have a book out at the minute called *Namesakes*, a sort of original quiz book. It gives you an original name, for example 'condom' (a popular word at the moment) and then gives you some multiple choice answers about who it was named after - a sort of private Trivial Pursuit.

Somebody from the publishers, Sphere, rang me up and asked if I'd go on Granada Television and talk about the book and I told them that I couldn't find a copy in any bookshop anywhere. I asked my agent to find out what was going on because it was not even in the airports and railway stations where it should be. I was told they were very disappointed with the reaction to it - it had only sold 4,000 copies. Considering it received no publicity I said 'That's a miracle!', and they said they couldn't force people to buy it. They implied it was too cerebral, too upmarket. What's upmarket about a quiz book? If any of your readers want to get hold of it, it is called *Namesakes* and it is published by Sphere Books.

> *"You just don't know who to believe; Colin or the BBC or the newspapers . . . Colin is a very outspoken man. . .I would have been equally upset if it was me. The only mistake I think Colin made was going to the papers with it, especially The Sun'"*

WHODUNNIT? was a semi-quiz series which you chaired on ITV for a few years straight after DOCTOR WHO.

It was written by Lance Percival and Jeremy Lloyd (of ALLO ALLO fame). Originally they did the pilot of the show and I was asked to be on the panel with another actor (who shall remain namel s) chairing the show. But he was desperately boring so, in a b k during recording, I went up to Lance and said, 'If you tell me o the murderer is I'll adopt a line of questioning which will have e audience on tenderhooks thinking I'm so near but I'll make su I don't get it right'. So he told me who the murderer was and a this the recording really took off and it went very well. T showed this pilot to some of the bosses at Thames Television they all agreed there should be another question master. The p ducer told them 'I reckon Jon Pertwee would do it very well', they were adamant that they wanted to screen-test some ot actors. So, at enormous expense, they got five different actors tc camera-tests, and after the Thar bosses had seen them the producer ‘Well, what do you think?’, and they said Jon Pertwee! It was a very popu show. We eventually did four series.

What do you remember of The Five Doct (1983)?

Not a lot, really. I do remember it wa joy going back into it with Lis (*Slade* We hadn't acted together for years and it was just as if we had never been away from each other. One occasion that comes to mind is coming down a mountain at about 80 mph. I was icy cold and my eyes were scarlet (there's a BBC postcard of me from that show which, if you look, has got red eyes!). Then a cameraman said to Lis, 'Would you mind slapping Jon's face?' She said 'Yes, I would, I'm very fond of him, why should I do that?' He said, 'Jon's face has turned blue and that is the only way of getting some colour back into him!'

How they ever got that whole thing together I'll never know. The director did an amazing job trying to control all of us, and it must've been particularly diffcult trying to control Pat and I. It was a pretty unique situation for all of us. Peter (*Davison*) is a very laid

PARTY
MEETING
TONIGHT
HARP
Harmony And Recreation Party
CITY OF LONDON
LONG LANE
E.C.1
KRUSE
You get more out o
with a Kensitas
EVERY PACKET CARRIES A GOVERNMENT

Jon Pertwee takes the Whomobile for a spin around East London (1974)

back man, a super guy. Pat and I got on tremendously well, we were great friends. Richard (*Hurndall*) was very good as the First Doctor too. I had a great time.

What was your reaction to Colin Baker's hasty exit from Doctor Who?

I naturally followed it but you just don't know who to believe; Colin or the BBC or the newspapers? I gather it was because of dropping viewing figures and that he wasn't a very popular choice for the Doctor (which is not my personal opinion). Colin is a very outspoken man, very intelligent. I would have been equally upset if it was me. The only mistake I think Colin made was going to the papers with it, especially *The Sun*. Anyway, Colin is doing very well on the stage now.

> *"The American attitude to conventions is vastly different . . . I was shocked to see, at the NFT the other week, people loafing all over their chairs with cans of beer in their hands. They had very little enthusiasm. In America they'd never do that"*

You seem to have covered the entire spectrum of entertainment; radio, theatre, comedy, science fiction...but is there anything you would still like to do?

Yes, I'd like to have done more in the international movie scene. I'd have liked to have got in to it in the same genre as Denholm Elliot, playing interesting cameo characters, but I'm a bit too long in the tooth for that now. I was supposed to be in Terry Gilliam's movie *The Adventures Of Baron Munchausen*. My agent negotiated for nearly a year but they wanted Sean Connery for a small role in it, and Connery's office said they'd like to suggest John Neville, a very famous Shakespearian actor, for the part I was up for, so naturally I was very disappointed.

Have you any aspirations to become a chat show host?

No, because I know my own abilities. A chat show host has got to be a journalist, really, with a mind that can flip from one thing to another very quickly. I would get completely tongue-tied if I had to interview a celebrated author or politician. I wouldn't know what to ask them! That's why Terry (*Wogan*) is so good. Nothing ever throws him, although he doesn't seem to want me on the show. Every time I'm scheduled to appear he cancels at the last minute!

Are you still keeping fit riding your bikes?

Yes, that is until last week when my agent arranged for a lovely big new machine - a Kawasaki 750cc - and the first day I used it to get to an important appointment the bugger broke down, they towed it away and I'm waiting for a new one. I use it mostly for convenience when I'm working at television studios or the West End of London.

I also do a bit of skiing and diving. I did a dive the other day for Children In Need at Portsmouth in a big fish tank which was full of conga eels and sharks.

Do you find it a burden being recognised in public?

I can turn it off if I want to, it's all a question of eye contact. If you don't make eye contact people will not come up to you and ask for an autograph or whatever. I *hate* giving autographs! If I'm doing a PA as Worzel it's a relief that I'm wearing my twig gloves so I can't hold a pen and it's no problem. I'd much rather have a chat or have my photo taken with someone because it's much more personal, but what is personal about scribbling on a piece of paper which they're probably going to lose on the way home anyway?

At Longleat in 1983 fans queued for hours for one autograph.

I know, I was sitting at the end of that long queue and I'd say 'I'm off to lunch now', and someone would say 'I've been queuing for five hours to get your autograph and now you're off to lunch!' I couldn't believe how badly organised it was.

In contrast some of the larger conventions can be wondrous, tremendously exciting. The American attitude to conventions is vastly different to the British one (DOCTOR WHO's popularity is waning very fast over there you know). I was shocked to see, at the NFT the other week, people loafing all over their chairs with cans of beer in their hands. They had very little enthusiasm. In America they'd never do that. If they like you they stand up and applaud and are always very polite. When I was going into the NFT I passed people queuing to get in. Now, they didn't know I was attending so you'd have thought I'd have got a 'Hello, how are you?', but there was nothing. However, having said that I got a very warm reception when I took to the stage.

Promoting *Day of the Daleks* (1972)

Who do you rate as your own favourite comedians?

Sid Field was a very funny man, Hancock was very good, and I like clown actors like Danny DeVito. Undoubtedly John Cleese. I don't like people being funny like Chevy Chase. I think something like STEPTOE AND SON was absolutely brilliant. Galton and Simpson were superb script writers.

I cannot stand the so-called 'alternative comedians'. I find them totally unfunny. I watched Ben Elton and I couldn't figure out what it was all about. He was just shouting obscenities. I cannot see what is funny about the likes of Harry Enfield. I don't min people swearing if they're funny. I saw a gi being interviewed by Des O'Connor th other day and she had a deadpan face. Sh was very droll, very gentle and possessed quiet sort of humour that had me in stitches. I like Les Patterson, he is qui revolting.

Say cheese...Elisabeth Sladen is unveiled as the new Who girl on 26th June 1973

What is your attitude to all these game sho that are mushrooming?

It's a cop out - a cheap way of filling u airtime. Somebody once said 'What's th good of making first class programmes for second class audience', and I'm afraid it true. There is a certain section of the Britis public who are so gormlessly-minded th all they can do is watch these show Channel 4 are doing very well with a va amount of interesting films and programmes.

What is the correct pronunciation of your name

Per-*twee* is the English version but my ancestral name is Perthuis de Laillavault We're a French family. I've contacted members of my family abroad as my section of the family escaped to England after the great religious purge in France and they settled mainly in Essex. Some came from Holland too. They were sheep farmers and settled in the Suffolk area. We're a very large family (Bill Pertwee is my cousin)."

● **Interviewed by Sheldon Collins, Robert Cope and Gary Leigh**

● **Postscript:** *Jon has continued to make a good living from public appearances as both Worzel Gummidge and the Doctor, and has become a regular fixture at Doctor Who conventions. Soon after this interview he donned his elegant cape once more to reprise the role on stage in Terrance Dicks' play The Ultimate Adventure, which was followed by two seasons in pantomime and then a highly-acclaimed performance as Jacob Marley in the stage musical Scrooge with Anthony Newley and Stratford Johns. He returned briefly to celluloid in 1992 with an appearance in BBC1's Virtual Murder and the feature film Carry On Columbus, but it is Doctor Who which these days occupies his most consistent work. He has presented The Pertwee Years and The Troughton Years for BBC Video, The Tomb of the Cybermen for BBC Radio Collection's range of Doctor Who audio tapes, and, in 1993, played the Doctor once again in Barry Letts' new adventure The Paradise of Death for Radio 5, alongside Elisabeth Sladen and Nicholas Courtney. He also joined the other surviving Doctors for the Children In Need pantomime skit, Dimensions in Time, and took part in the ReelTime production, Return to Devil's End, with other cast and crew members from the 1971 classic The Dæmons. BBC repeats of that story and The Sea Devils, Planet of the Daleks and The Green Death have ensured that his portrayal of the Doctor has gained a whole new generation of fans.*

Caroline John, Jon Pertwee and producer Derrick Sherwin (*Spearhead from Space*, 1970)

Toys galore (*Planet of the Spiders*, 1974)

A 1957 publicity photograph

1971 **the companions** 1973

Katy Manning

"I was madly in love with David Troughton at the time, but I was too shy to tell him" **- March 1987**

“I CAME to Australia about - I'm terrible with time! - five years ago. I basically just looked up one day and I thought 'My God, that sky's sitting low on my head', and I suddenly realised that it was actually depressing me. And so my twins (Georgie and JJ) and mother packed our suit cases and we left everything! We decided we wanted to see higher skies and I generally just wanted more space around me. I was going potty in London, I really was becoming a neurotic mess!

Everybody said 'You're mad, you're crazy, everything's going so well for you, why do you want to start again...?' Something I have learned from starting all over again, when nobody cares who the hell you are or what the hell you've done in England over the years, is what I was capable of doing myself. Suddenly I was running my life instead of my life being run for me. I was able to find out my own strengths and my own weaknesses which I'd never, up to that point, been able to do fully, and that's been very rewarding - I've enjoyed making my own mistakes and what little successes I have had. But yes, it is damn difficult to start again.

On the set of *The Mind of Evil* (1971)

Starting off nobody would cast me as an Australian, but finally I got a little movie where I played an Australian mother, which was with Henry Thomas, who was the little boy in ET, called *Frog Dreaming*. I did a lot of plays with people like Martin Shaw, Andrew Sachs and other English actors who came out here. That really was my bread and butter, and now things have started looking up in the last year or so. Whether or not I'll ever get totally accepted here I don't know.

It's interesting because DOCTOR WHO seems to be run here every year and I'm always absolutely amazed when people recognise me (and they do), because I figure I'm that much older now and you know how we all change every five minutes. My kids - Georgie and JJ - are watching and all their friends at school are watching, so imagine what it's like turning up there to collect them. Georgie and JJ are very flash: 'My mummy, yes, she used to be in DOCTOR WHO', and all this kind of thing. So when I go to pick them up from school it's 'Ooh, look, Georgie and JJ's mum, she's in DOCTOR WHO!'

When I did a slightly risque play in Sydney called *Otherwis Engaged*, a whole bunch schoolboys turned up, and wasn't the kind of play I fancie having half the audience full schoolboys in, but they cam because they were DOCTO WHO fans. In Australia there a huge following for the ol DOCTOR WHOs whereas there not a big following for the ne which is interesting. They real don't like the new here ver much. I've known and worke with Colin Baker and I alwa maintained he would be a absolutely fabulous Doctor Why has he been fired? Wha has he done wrong? You ca never believe what you read i newspapers. My theory is tha Colin Baker played Michael Grade at Scrabble and beat him, and from what I've heard Michael Grade is a very bad loser at Scrabble!

Is it true what I've heard that Sylvester puts ferrets down his trousers? Well, it could be very handy in time and space, I mean, they're going to be able to entertain people by having the Doctor sticking a ferret down his trousers! I really don't know what to say - they won't need a sidekick, they'll just use a ferret! Bonnie Langford, ferrets down the trousers! I think it's going to be hysterical, and probably will work because of it! Is he going to stick Bon...no, I won't say that!

I used to love DOCTOR WHO. I grew up with it but I never thought I'd ever be in it. I used to watch the William Hartnell and Patrick Troughton ones, then I was working and I didn't get to see Jon's first season. I think had Jo been with Patrick Troughton it would have been insanity! I'd met Jon once before very briefly, but it was very early on in my career. I'd done a series prior to that, but it was a deep, meaningful series, and Jon was really like a sort of teacher to me and we got on so well that what you got was what we were. We really liked each other, we got on so well. What was lovely about doing a series like Doctor Who was working with one's imagination and the terrific team of actors.

I came in at the beginning of Women's Lib (blaaargh!) where all the girls have gone since, whereas I was in that era where the changeover started to come. At the end Jo started to get a bit more capable, but also bear in mind I was very young as a character as she'd just left school. I thought it was rather nice having a screaming heroine, it's very old-fashioned, but if you're a heroine who can do anything then what is the point of having a Doctor around?

I can tell you I enjoyed going to work fifteen years ago every day of my life! I had a ball every day and there aren't many jobs that I can say, after 23-odd years, have been such consistent pleasure. When I was in it it was a real tight team. I mean, we ate lunch together, we ate dinner together, we travelled together and we worked together. That is a hell of a test for three years, that actors can live and work together so closely, because usually, at some point, you start grating on each others' nerves a bit, and that never happened, never, never, never! I used to giggle a lot and get into trouble for that, but I still do that now!

Terror of the Autons, 1971

I loved *The Curse of Peladon* (1972) with David Troughton - whom I was madly in love with at the time but was too shy to tell him - and it was great being called Princess Josephine for a change and scaling a mountain in my beautiful princess's gown! Also I have always been very partial to the large, one-eyed pickled cucumber. Not Ambi Dextrous, what was it, oh yes, Alpha Centauri! It was so sweet and so silly with this little bit of net curtain wrapped around its neck! That's the charm of Doctor Who in those days. I mean, it was all done like that - we had the Sea Devils in the sea and all their bits of latex floating up to the surface, and these creatures live under the sea but their bodies float on the top! I love it, charming.

I remember the mistakes, like 'Jo "graunches" the Brig', it said in one stage direction. I spent a whole week trying to find out what 'graunch' meant and how the hell I was supposed to approach the graunching. We never did find out what the graunching was - the Brig had a few ideas though! Misprints in scripts are always hysterical. We had times when the scripts didn't quite make sense here and there, which wasn't very often, but when they did we had such fun rewriting those bits. We had incidents like we'd go filming to Dungeness (*The Claws of Axos, 1971*), and in three days we had thick snow, fog, bright sunshine and rain, and so eventually they had to put in this very creative line: "With freak weather conditions in Dungeness" (and this scene was all supposed to take place within four minutes - like Melbourne weather!).

> *"I can't think of anything funnier than wearing sparkly boots and a red G-string and posing naked against a Dalek, but obviously I'm alone in my humour"*

I left because I thought three years is about it. I had to find out whether I could do anything else, and I think it's good for a thing like Doctor Who to change the girls every two or three years. I literally left Doctor Who and walked straight into a movie, then I went into the West End for two years and then I did all my things at the Young Vic and the Chichester Festival. I did all the classics and then I was doing Play Of The Month - I didn't stop, actually. I've worked continuously since then.

Just recently I went over and did one of those fourteen-cities-in-fourteen-days madness in the States. They send you over there and put you in football stadiums with thousands of fans and leave you there to entertain them for hours. Quite unnerving, actually.

I'd go back to England if it was the right offer doing the right thing, but I've got other ideas now what I want to do as well, so who knows? Maybe England via America. I don't think I'd ever reprise Jo for a special or whatever. No, you never boil your old cabbages twice! That has been put to me and that's my stock answer, I'm afraid. You can't go back. I had such a good time, I could never top it. They wanted me to return for the anniversary story and I said I didn't want to do it. Then Tom became a cardboard cut out and so they had to team Sarah up with Jon and they wrote for her as though it was Jo speaking!

If we knew the secret of Doctor Who's success we would bottle it up and clean up! It has continued for so long because it is charming and because it is unpretentious. It is totally unique in its conception - everything else tries so damn hard to be so damn clever whereas Doctor Who has a slightly eccentric quality which all the Doctors have had.

As for *those* photos (*see overleaf*), well, that went down like a cup of cold sick when I did it. Obviously I have this very, very sick sense of humour! I thought it was quite funny but nobody else did. I mean, I can't think of anything funnier than wearing sparkly boots and a red G-string and posing naked against a Dalek, but obviously I'm alone in my humour, which as you can see is blatant. But to be honest I just thought it was funny. I don't think it did any harm...well, the Dalek didn't mind, but the British press were not amused by my strange idea of humour!" ❑

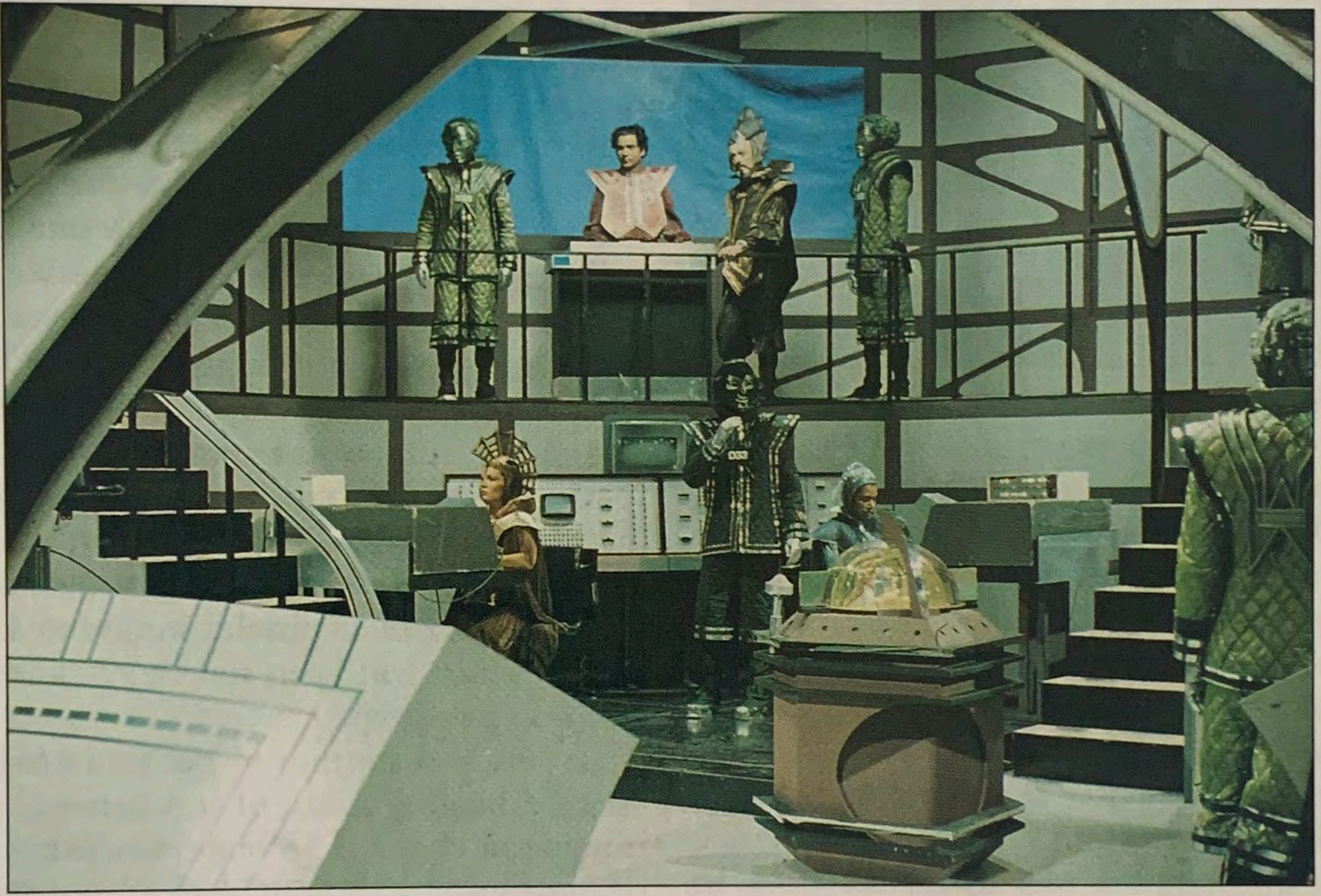
● **Interviewed by Gary Leigh.**

● **Postscript:** *On re-reading this article I am rendered speechless by my own insanity, but I'm still here and I'm still working! I think it is time for another interview... -* ***Katy Manning, January 1994***

1967 **the designers** 1977

Kenneth Sharp

"I didn't want to have to prove again that I could be brilliant and inventive on tuppence ha'penny" - **March 1991**



***The Robots of Death* (1977)**

“I LEFT ART SCHOOL, having studied sculpture, not knowing what I was going to do, and I saw an advertisement in *The Stage* for trainee scenic artists at Thames Television (or ABC as it was then). I wasn't entirely sure what scenic artists did, or indeed whether I wanted the job, but I went for an interview and they offered it to me.

I started painting scenery, and after a while I discovered that there was somebody in television called a designer who designed the sets, chose the props and organised the studio, and I decided I would pursue that course. ABC, however, saw otherwise having trained me as a scenic artist, so I was there for about a year getting pretty bored painting scenery. I did get the chance to make the odd prop, though, because they hadn't got a prop or visual effects department as such and would sometimes approach the scenic artists.

Then, in 1964, the BBC were advertising for trainee designers for the new BBC2 but I came across that too late. Although they interviewed me they said that they had recruited all their trainee designers for BBC2, but maybe next year I could come in on (what the BBC used to call) ‘holiday relief’. So in 1965 I went to the BBC as a summer relief design assistant for five months, after which I assumed, being such a short-term contract, I'd be thrown out, but I wasn't and I remained at the BBC for nineteen years as a set designer.

I started off on CRACKERJACK, which I did for six months, and my second design project was *The Macra Terror* (*1967*). It was a challenge and you had to prove yourself. Everyone did great things on DOCTOR WHO so you had to do better. You had to do everything at the BBC - drama one minute, light entertainment and current affairs the next. You couldn't specialise. Few people could say they only did period drama, but us fledglings had to do anything!

The Macra weren't really specifically described in the script. We knew that they lived in underground tunnels so John Davies, the director, and I took ourselves off to the Science Museum and looked at ‘things’. We saw an insect in a glass case which I think was from South America. It was like a little crab about three-quar-

Tom Baker and Louise Jameson (*The Robots of Death*, 1977)

The claws of Axos (*The Claws of Axos*, 1971)

Kenneth Sharp on the set of *The Macra Terror* (1967)

ters of an inch long with pincers in order to excavate. In the script the Macra had to dig these tunnels so we thought these pincer-like claws would be appropriate. Finally they ended up as these coloured, armoured crabs.

The word Macra came from an abbreviation of the Latin name for the insect chosen. We mounted the Macra on a sort of a tricycle base and it took two people to operate it. We only had one complete one and various arms that we used to wave in front of the cameras to be the others. When they were supposed to be going through the tunnels we sent the complete one around in circles so it would just be the same one going round and round and round!

It was set in a holiday camp with people marching about and playing funny music, which all looked hunky dory on the surface but there were darker elements underneath. I remember Gertan Klauber (Ola) being nasty and the music was interesting, but I can't remember much apart from that. We did it at Lime Grove D which was a little studio so all the sets were very low compared to the rest of the BBC studios. You certainly couldn't get a double-storey set in there. The only stock set Doctor Who had was the TARDIS and the TARDIS interior, which actually took up a lot of space in the studio and mostly we tried to avoid it if we could.

You did one episode and as you were doing the next one the previous week's was being transmitted (I can remember that because they sometimes had Doctor Who up on the transmission monitor!). It's different now of course because it's made and stuffed in a can for six months, but then it was always the case that it would be billed in the *Radio Times* with your name stuck on it before you'd even made it!

In those days of black and white you could get away with so much more because the picture quality wasn't very good. When Doctor Who went colour it made life more difficult for everybody because, for example, if you were putting a half-mask on somebody you had to get the colouring right. Apparently one of the reasons *The Elephant Man* was made in black and white was because it would have taken them so long to have applied all those lumps and bumps to his face and get the colour match right. We also had the Chromakey facility which, of course, we didn't have in black and white - you had to rely on back projection which took up so much room in the studio. You could waste a quarter of a studio with back projection as in *The Macra Terror*, whereas when it came to Chromakey you didn't use any space behind it at all, although the image was never very good.

Before my next Doctor Who, I did a few Billy Cotton Band Shows and some sit-coms. The first colour show I did was an ice-skating series called Ice Cabaret, then Up Pompeii! and the first Barry Humphries series (which had Edna cooking indigenous Australian recipes!).

Then came *The Claws of Axos* (*1971*), which was done almost entirely on CSO (the BBC name for Chromakey). If I remember correctly, it was done in the second phase of Chromakey on yellow, not blue, to get away from the 'fringing' effect. Chromakey can be done on any primary colour except red, which is too near the flesh tones and the pupils of peoples' eyes end up getting inflammations. Blue was generally favoured because it's easier to avoid anything else blue in the picture whereas yellow would clash with people who had blond hair.

When I read the script I was horrified - it all happened inside this animal's brain and it was all 'throb and pulse'. To prepare for that we went off and watched another film, *Fantastic Voyage*, which was the inspiration for *The Claws of Axos*. I also got the people who were then doing projections on Top Of The Pops (called Crab Nebula) in to do the amoeba-like pulsing effects. That thing we put up on Dungeness Beach was one end of the animal's body, an antennae that people would wander into like a cavern leading inside a living creature. When we went to bury it and pile shingle around it the thing almost collapsed because it was only foam rubber and latex on a chicken wire base.

I didn't join into the spirit of it as much as on my first Doctor Who and so didn't get as friendly with Katy and Jon as I did with Michael Craze, Frazer Hines, Anneke Wills and Patrick Troughton. However, the good thing then was that they had started doing two episodes in one to save putting the sets up four times, which had been time consuming, so we did it in two lo recording sessions.

It was also starting to get more high-powered. I think peo were expecting more of it whereas in the old days it was m tongue in cheek. The budgets went up but the expectations w greater too. I think it had an adequate budget, but of course th were other limitations like time and also what you could m things from. For example, the BBC's fire regulations are so str gent and there are lots of things you'd like to use but couldn't. Y could use metal or wood if it was fire retardent, but there were l of expanded foams you couldn't use because the fire offi wouldn't pass them. You got bored with metal and wood and y wanted plastic materials. The Axon costumes were made of fo on chamois leather, which made them acceptable from a fire po of view but also made them more expensive. If they'd been latex foam it would have been cheaper and probably you'd have g better results, but it would have been thrown out by the fire of cers. Most of the time you couldn't use any materials that you care to use.

I THEN DID the BBC1 Classic serial *The Prince and the Paupe* and various historical things, and some light entertainment like The Mike Yarwood Show. I then did Fifty Years Of Music, the BBC's anniversary retrospective programme about light entertainment in the Twenties up to the Seventies, and a lot of music and arts programmes like They Sold A Million and Profile In Music. I also did Hansel And Gretal -The Opera, and almost all the tricks that one had used in Doctor Who came in jolly useful for that!

There were about seventy BBC staff set designers in those days. People would ask for you or sometimes you would be made to do things you didn't want to do, which you sometimes thought was some degree of punishment and which probably leads me to my next Doctor Who, which I didn't want to do at all - *The Robots of Death* (*1977*)! Having proven myself in music and art and that sort of entertainment, I didn't then want to have to prove again that I could be brilliant and inventive on tuppence ha'penny!

It wasn't until I met Elizabeth Waller, the costume designer, that I really got interested in the project. She had done ELIZABETH R and had won Oscars, Emmys and BAFTAs all around the world. Here was I allocated this DOCTOR WHO with the great Lizzie Waller! I met up with her and liked her enormously, and we really sparked off each other from our earliest meeting (this was to be her last production for the BBC).

One of the great things about working for the BBC were these very long run-up periods; we weren't due to start this DOCTOR WHO for another couple of weeks. In fact we had nothing at all to do so we took ourselves off to Brentford, where the Special Effects Department was at that time, and that's when we started fiddling around modelling the robots' head. Michael Briant, the director, had said he didn't want masks, so we thought, 'Oh well, we'll just see what we can come up with'.

I modelled the robots' head because of my experience with sculpture at art school (in fact one of my sculptures was displayed in the Royal Academy when I was a student). Then Rose Garrard, a very good sculptress who had made props for me previously, tidied them up, cast them and did the various treatments on them to distinguish them between their various ranks of Dums, Vocs and Super Vocs. Lizzie did the breastplates. Michael then came over and, having said he didn't want masks, liked them.

We never intended to do anything that was totally original with *The Robots of Death*. We'd all watched Jules Verne movies and decided that 'futurism' was what we were trying to achieve. It's very difficult to be totally original - it's easier to look back at something and do it in the spirit of that, like the recent *Batman* which was influenced by *Metropolis*. There seemed a chance to make the whole thing - the robots as well - fit that theme. Normally you have a monster - some horrible thing with arms and antennae - and you'd have architecture that really wouldn't lend itself to the same sort of treatment, but with the robots it leant itself to the whole thing having the same visual style. Art Deco isn't really the word, it's futurism; futurism as of the Fritz Lang-style of Hollywood science fiction movies around the Thirties or even earlier, so I suppose you could say that *Metropolis* was the inspiration.

> *"We never intended to do anything that was totally original with The Robots of Death. We'd all watched Jules Verne movies and decided that 'futurism' was what we were trying to achieve...You could say that Metropolis was the inspiration"*

Michael also went along with that. For the humans' costumes we looked at these small, wooden and ivory nouveau figures with these head dresses which have now become popular, so there was an element of that art nouveau futurism there. Literally this hadn't been done before - everybody else had done everything else in DOCTOR WHO but it seemed to fit. I felt quite keen by that stage, and Lizzie was such fun to work with and an inspiration in a way because she was also so keen. And also we genuinely liked Michael and he was enthusiastic so you get enthusiastic and it takes over.

Obviously, the electronic effects were getting better. We didn't just have CSO now, we also had inlay and all sorts of other effects. People like Dave Jervis were messing around on the inlay desk in the gallery - putting ghosts on the picture and halos around people which had been done so crudely before (if such effects were required!). The thing about DOCTOR WHO, however, was that, somehow, the advancements technically were always greater than we could keep up with money-wise. We were, to an extent, still in the Stone Age trying to nail two bits of hardboard together, and yet the technical possibilities were limitless. We were always bogged down by a shortage of cash and these wrong inflammable materials that we had to use when we really wanted to be using inflatables or flexible materials. Also, the BBC's method of operation was restricting in that you had to dismantle a set and put it back up again the following week.

I think Tom Baker was more communicative than Jon Pertwee. I think it was partly because we had to bury him in cork chips in the first episode and he got absolutely filthy with dirt everywhere. I went home and blew my nose and it was all this black stuff which he must have inhaled as well. I think one got to know him more because we'd shared such an unpleasant experience so early on in the story. Jon Pertwee was pleasant enough but I didn't seem to stoke up any particular friendship with him.

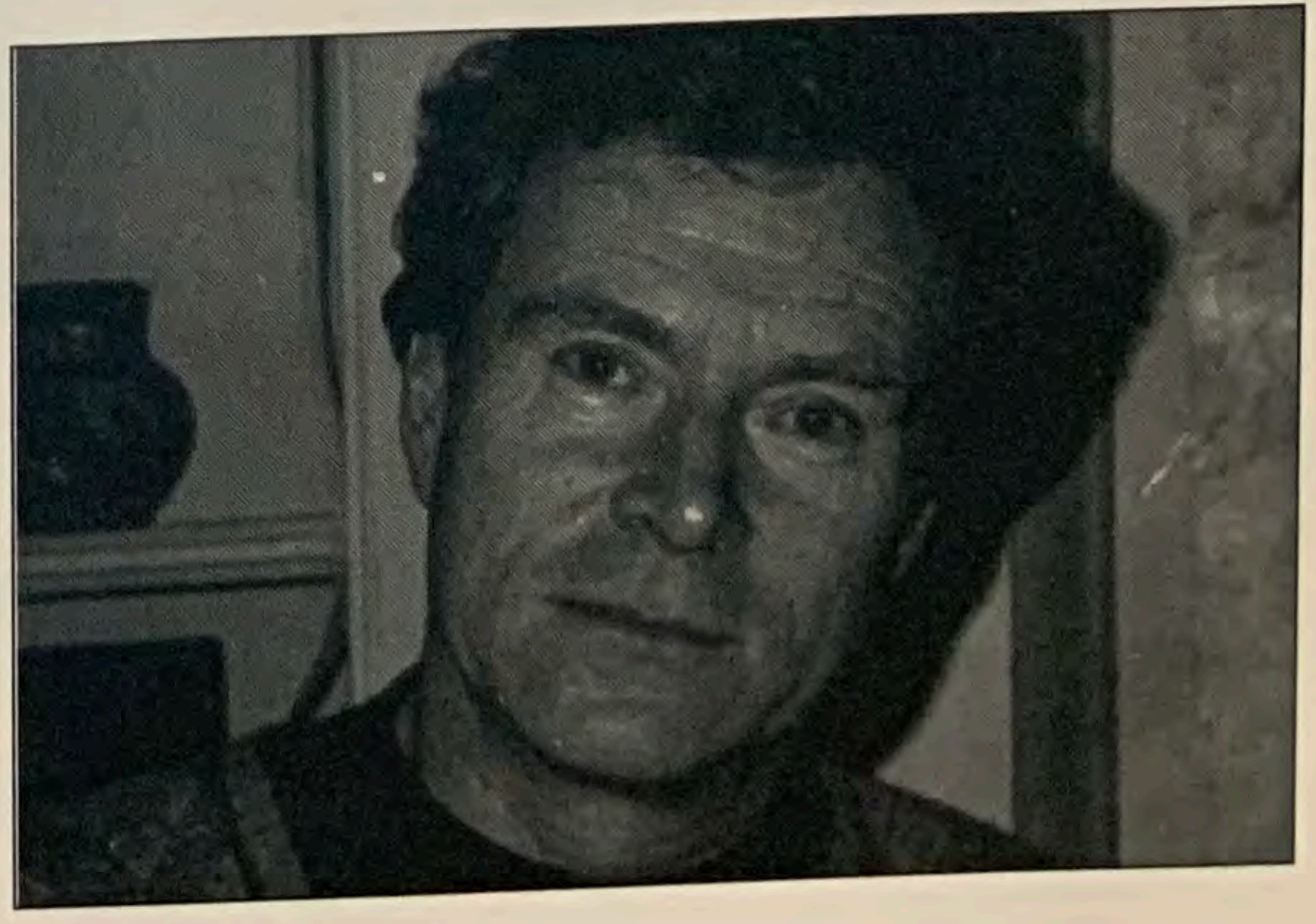
I used to watch DOCTOR WHO and I think Tom Baker was probably the best, I don't know why. I sort of tuned out of it after that to tell you the truth because I didn't do any more. I think, probably, the enthusiasm started to wane after that for it. They were changing Doctors to put some life into it when really all they were doing was repeating what had happened before. There are only so many monsters you can encounter and so many terrible situations and so many times the Daleks can come back, and by the end of about 1978 they'd run out of ideas.

I did watch a couple after Tom Baker, actually. There was one rather good one that happened in a weird sort of circus tent (*The Greatest Show in the Galaxy, 1989*), that was very good. That seemed to me to have an element which none of the others had had. It was probably a little too sophisticated for the audience, but I can remember that one whereas I can't remember so many others. It had a visual style that was memorable.

I left the BBC in 1984 and went to HTV for five years where I did things like ROBIN OF SHERWOOD, where some of my experiences in DOCTOR WHO were used. I also did some Channel 4 music shows there and since then I've been freelance doing drama and some situation comedy like BIRDS OF A FEATHER. As a freelancer I think the work's harder than in an institutional set-up, but I think that's the way it's going to go. Programmes like DOCTOR WHO worked in a way because everybody had the experience of the one that went before. In the freelance world they almost rely on having people who are experts from birth! I mean, how do you get the experience? You watch brilliant things like *Batman* and somehow people have the experience to do it, and anyone in their right sense doing the next *Batman* film would get the original crew back. I just wonder in the future where it's going to come from. Mind you, it's been freelance for some time now in America and there haven't been these stables or schools to train people and they've managed to produce programmes, but I think things like DOCTOR WHO happened because it evolved within the BBC and people did return and bring other things to it, and that probably wouldn't happen outside." ❑

● **Interviewed by Gary Leigh**

● **Postscript:** *Kenneth is currently employed on a freelance basis by the independent production company Alomo Productions, and lives in Bristol.*



1968 **the writers** 1983

Terrance Dicks

"They were thinking about a replacement for the show after Troughton left" - November 1989

"IN 1968 I was offered the job of script editor to take over from Derrick Sherwin. It came completely out of the blue. Derrick and I had worked on CROSSROADS together. I wrote lots of scripts and was storyliner for six months. It was the first proper job I had in television - at the start you'll do anything! I got on very well with it. A funny thing is my career started in advertising, then I did soap opera and moved up to DOCTOR WHO and finally went into the Classics serials. All that time the TV industry has been moving steadily in the opposite direction: down from quality TV to popular TV, to soap opera, to advertising! I would actually have been better off if I'd stayed in advertising all along!

Wendy Padbury and Simon Jones as The Grand Master of Karn (*The Seven Keys to Doomsday*, 1974)

My first recollection of DOCTOR WHO is going to playbacks of *The Web of Fear* (*1968*), which I had nothing to do with but I remember turning up and seeing what was going on. In those days DOCTOR WHO wasn't really regarded as a prestigious show at the BBC. Barry will be the first to tell you that when they asked him to be producer they had already offered the post to four other people who all said 'You must be joking!' Fortunately Barry liked the idea of doing it, but it wasn't a job that people would fight to get within the BBC.

My first season (*six*) was in a terrible state and we didn't really start getting sorted out until Barry took over. We were always desperately [illegible] gling to get the show [illegible]. When I joined in the [illegible] of the Troughton days they [illegible] talking about taking the [illegible] off, and I was very soon [illegible] that this might be the [illegible] season. I thought 'Ter[illegible], this is like getting a job on the Titanic!' Certainly they were thinking about a replacement for the show after Patrick Troughton left. The only reason they went ahead with Pertwee was they couldn't come up with anything better. Sh[illegible]

Jon Pertwee, Nicholas Courtney, Patrick Troughton and Katy Manning (*The Three Doctors*, 1973)

Barry Letts, Terrance Dicks and Jon Pertwee (*The Time Warrior*, 1974)

and Bryant went off and did other things, and the BBC thought 'Oh well, we might as well do another season of Doctor Who'. And then everything kind of clicked together; Jon became the Doctor, I continued as script editor, Barry took over as producer and colour came in. That first season was a smash, and it was a smash for something like the next twelve years, I think.

It was decided, during Patrick Troughton's final season, to do less shows but of a much higher quality, because doing forty-odd episodes a year was a great strain on the writers and impossibly punishing on the actors. It was also worked out, as a production decision rather than a creative one, that the only way we could do a good season next year would be to set the stories on Earth, and UNIT was created to give him a loose base. Doctor Who was always short of money and we were finding it harder and harder to create a convincing alien planet. If you set your stories on Earth you can take your cameras outside and shoot London, the countryside or wherever, whereas if you're doing hardcore science fiction, or the kind where you're going to other worlds, everything you see has got to be built from scratch. It gives you production advantages, but it's also true you are stuck with very much the same kind of story. Malcolm Hulke said, 'Well, you've got two types of story - mad Earth scientist or alien invasion from space', and if you think about it that's more or less true, so we had to work out variants on that.

Before *The War Games* (*1969*) the Time Lords had never been heard of. It was only known that the Doctor was a fugitive and kind of hinted that he was on the run and could never go back to his own world, there was no back history. I think it was my predecessor, Derrick Sherwin, who sort of invented them without knowing it. He said, 'Isn't he a member of some race called the Time Lords?' I don't know where he got that - maybe somebody else had said it in the early days - but we came up with the idea of the Time Lords. At the end of the Troughton era the decision had been taken to do the UNIT stories, so we wanted to get the Doctor on Earth. The resolution of *The War Games* was always going to be that, in order to solve that particular problem, the Doctor had to contact his own people again, even though he knew it meant his own capture. We knew by then that Patrick was going and that we were recasting with Jon so the whole thing dove-tailed together. We brought in the episode with the Time Lords to gell it all, and they then tended to pop up later on and dispatch the Doctor on missions or give him a few words of advice.

> *"We found the fewer the better with companions. I was always happy with one, two is the maximum absolutely, and if you get the TARDIS like a number nine bus you're in trouble!"*

Over the next few years, we gradually started breaking away from that formula by having the Doctor get away more and more. The two mediums worked and got better results, figures and prestige. We were able to say, 'Well, if you want shows as good as this, you've got to pay for it', and Barry got the budget pushed up. It was also economical to do longer shows, which are cheaper per episode in terms of sets and costumes, and again it was a matter of pushing up the quality which in turn pushed up the budget that enabled us to do more and more shorter shows. We were lucky that Ronnie Marsh, our Head of Department then, was a great Who fan and supported us a lot. He liked what he called 'The first night', and the more new stories you could give him, the better. I think it's a shame in a way that they only seemed to do four-parters later on because there's a place for the good six-parter.

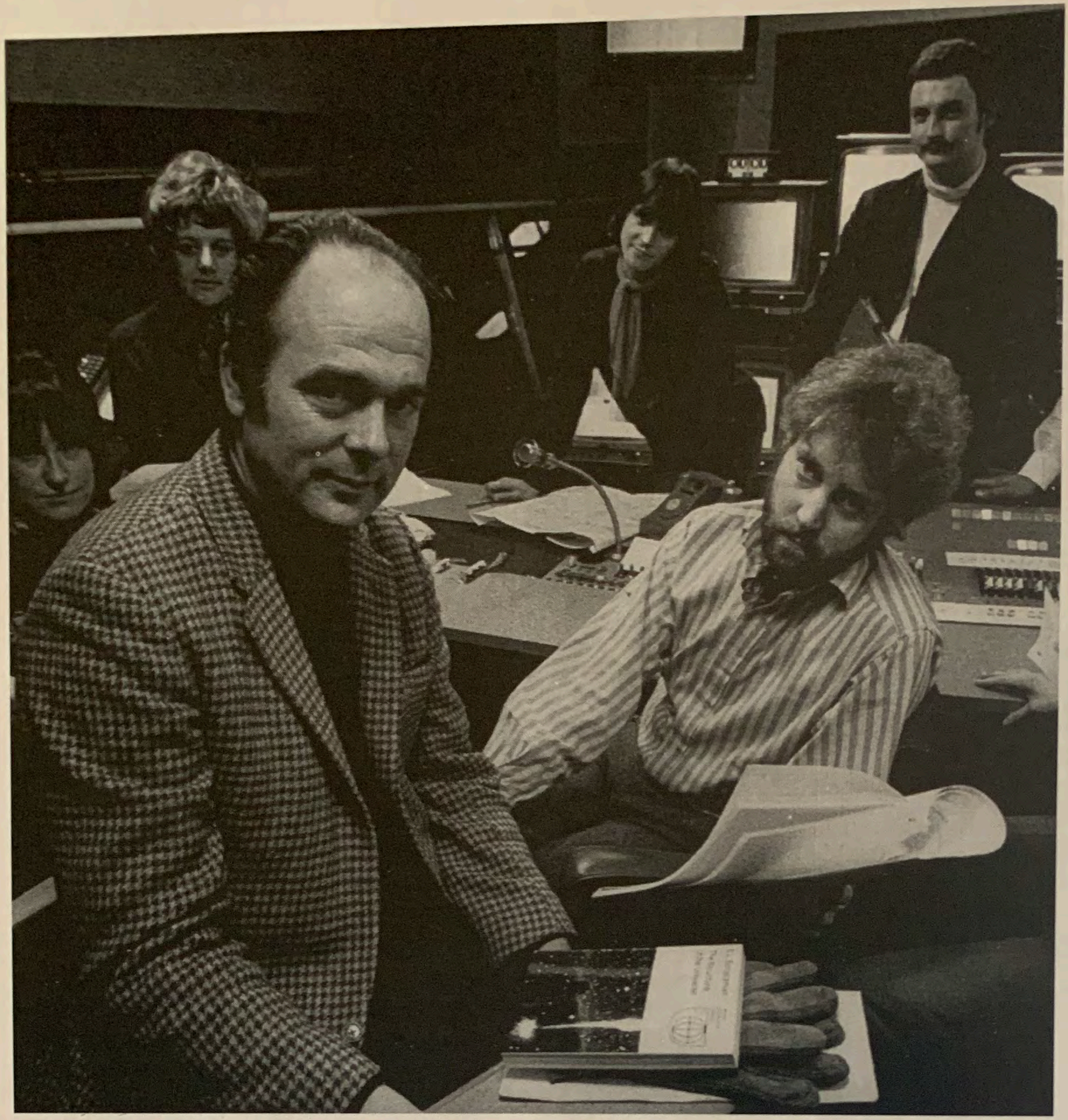
For *The Three Doctors* (*1972/3*) we got all the scripts written with the first Doctor playing a very active part running through the whole thing, which we hurriedly rewrote so that he appeared only on the monitor screen. In creative terms it worked very well because he had this very exalted, God-like status where he would suddenly appear and say a few incisive words and calm them all down. Patrick and Jon carried the story between them and you had this very nice double-act that they did which worked very well. Because each Earth invasion story was getting to be more and more of a contrivance, we wanted finally to come full circle and say, 'Okay, the exile is over, the TARDIS is working again and Who will go back to its old format', and since the Omega thing was a great threat to the Time Lords that made it a good occasion for him to have finally served his time and receive his pardon.

Something Barry and I found out, through trial and experience, was that it was no good sitting back and saying to the world of writers at large, 'Okay, we want some stories for Doctor Who, what are your ideas?', because you then get in a hundred ideas, all of which are unusable for various reasons the writer couldn't know about. For example they're not the kind of thing you're doing, you couldn't afford it, or you did a similar thing last season. What we evolved to do was to inject a great deal of input from the top. We would sit down and discuss the forthcoming season and we'd say, 'We've got to have five stories. Now, we want a story of this kind and a story of that kind...who would be the best people to write them?' We would even think up a general outline of the sort of story we wanted. *The Time Warrior* is an example where we thought it was a long time since we've done an historical story, so let's do a story about an alien spaceship that crashes in our past and tries to influence it. All of that came from us and we took it to Robert Holmes and discussed it between us.

Equally, when the Doctor needed a new companion, we would sit down and work out what kind of person she should be. From a professional point of view it's a thankless task being a companion because the Doctor dominates the show. He gets the best lines, the best scenes, and there's always a certain amount of where the companion is treading water. Carrie John was very good in a strong dramatic scene, but she got very fed up if she didn't have much to do. Jo (Katy Manning) had such charm and ebullience that she could chunter through a fairly light scene where she wasn't doing or saying very much and carry it on her simple likeability and personality. Sarah (Lis Sladen) was a strong character in her own right, not a scientist but somebody who wouldn't necessarily always agree with the Doctor. She never was formally his assistant, they just got involved, and that was a response to the growing world of women's lib. The traditional role of the female companion is to scream, be rescued by the Doctor and to tell him how wonderful he is, and it was becoming increasingly evident that we weren't going to get away with that for much longer.

From my point of view, as a writer or script editor, with more than one companion you get a lot of people standing around in a scene and it gets harder and harder to find something for them all to do and say. You would read a scene and realise that 'Fred's' been standing in the corner for two minutes and he hasn't had a word, and when he does get a word in he says, 'My word, that's fascinating, Doctor', so we found the fewer the better with companions. I was always happy with one, two is the maximum absolutely, and if you get the TARDIS like a number nine bus you're in trouble!

The Master was also one of those shape of the season decisions. Someone had said the Doctor is rather like Sherlock Holmes in lots of ways and what we need is a Moriarty, an equal. The Master is the name that an egotist would choose, a title. Like the Earthbound thing he was good for one or two stories, but having a supervillain in *every* story in a season begged the question that, if they're so smart, how come the Master never kills the Doctor and the Doctor never catches the Master? It got too much so we then held him back and slipped him in every few stories. It was always a great moment when he appeared, like in *Colony in Space* (*1971*)



Barry Letts, Terrance Dicks and director Douglas Camfield in the production gallery for *Inferno* (1970)

where you've got this build-up to this important character from Earth, and when he finally arrives it's the Master!

The Daleks are analogous to the Master in that they are very popular and effective. They struck gold with the Daleks in the early days of the serial. Whenever they got stuck they said 'Let's have the Daleks again', and of course, not unnaturally, they ran them into the ground and you got into the danger of people saying, 'Oh my God, not those bloody Daleks again!' It was an asset which, like the Master, you had to use carefully, and every now and again, when we thought it was a reasonable time, we would bring them back again.

Variety was always the keynote. You had to have a story that would give you mileage, and that was always one of my key worries. Will this story go to six episodes, will it go to four? Are we going to get a sag in episode four where they're all marking time and nothing is actually happening? So the common denominator was a strong plot, or often a series of plots so you get two strong interweaving plots, to keep the show moving. There also had to be a solidity of material. Lots of writers sent in ideas which we would have run through in one-and-a-half episodes, and with a six-parter you are dealing with nearly three hours of television time, equivalent to a super-epic film. You get through an awful lot of stuff in that time, especially in a fast-moving show.

We did some pretty scarey stuff (it got scarier after we left), but we were always very aware of treading a line. We had a shot of somebody's face collapsing inwards in a mask, as though it was sucked in, and it was horrifying. The special effects people were very proud of it and Barry saw it and said, 'Yes, yes, very good — take it out or cut it down to a very quick flash'. We would always be aware. Somebody wrote a big leading article in *The Daily Express* once: 'DOCTOR WHO'S TEATIME HORROR SHOW!', it said, and there was a campaign and questions in Parliament.

France won't touch DOCTOR WHO because the whole series, as far as they're concerned, is too frightening, and that goes for most of Europe. We only really sell in the English-speaking countries although it's a show that could be very popular elsewhere, I'm sure. They take lots of other programmes, but French television withdrew their hands in horror at DOCTOR WHO!

I think our time was pretty good, once we got going. The first part of Tom's era, when Bob Holmes took over as script editor, they were not only as successful as we'd been, they were more so. They took a well-established success and actually pushed it up a bit more. The Graham Williams period wasn't bad at the beginning. The trouble was that Tom needed a strong producer to control him and he didn't get one. I think the first five years of Tom's reign as the Doctor are excellent. Jon will always be my favourite, but five years of Jon and five years of Tom and everything was fine. It started to go off I think when Tom was allowed to get out of control and walk through it. Tom got bored you see. The show faltered and never really recovered after the end of his time.

AFTER DOCTOR WHO I went ba to being freelance for about five six years when I wrote most of t early novels, and Barry mov over to being producer of t Sunday Classic serial which he did for t five years I was away. Then he asked me to join the show as scri edit.

The Sunday Classic was a popular and prestigious series and was getting good ratings, but now the BBC just doesn't have t money to do it anymore.

When Barry was doing the Classic serial he was doing thr serials a year for about ten years, regular as clockwork. When took over I did three shows my first year, two shows my secon year, one long one in my third year and one short one in my fourt year. The whole thing was dwindling away - it was all to do wit money.

Grade came in just as I took over as producer with *Oliver Twist* which was an enormous success. They were thinking then about taking the Classic serial off, but then people have always been talking of taking it off - even in Barry's time people were walking about with an axe. Anyway, *Oliver Twist* got audiences of 10-12 million. Jonathan Powell told me that Michael Grade was totally *amazed* by its success. I think that brought us a reprieve for a year or two. In my time we did some very good and successful shows like *The Diary of Anne Frank*, and Barry's *Alice in Wonderland*.

Television over here is getting like America; 25 channels and crap on all of them. They are going for cheap shows with high audiences - soaps and game shows - exactly the opposite of the Classic serials which are generally expensive shows with moderate audiences. You're never going to pull them in with Dickens in the way you do with NEIGHBOURS. That's not the way things are. What you're going to get is tabloid television in the way you get tabloid journalism but in the newspaper world the quality press can survive because the expenses aren't so high.

It's also to do with the decline of the influence of the BBC. If you're going to have quality television I think you've got to be really undemocratic and say 'We're going to do all the plays of Shakespeare in chronological order because they ought to be done, and you ought to watch them because it's educational and they'll be very good for you'. Now that is terrible arrogance in a sense. Not everyone wants to watch Shakespeare on TV, and the same goes for other literary classics. But if we don't do it nobody will, and now we've almost stopped doing it. You also lose what I call the 'as-good-as' factor with ITV, who occasionally come up with very good shows. For example, ITV did BRIDESHEAD REVISITED and THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN to show they were as good as the BBC. There *are* people at ITV who want to do quality stuff. With them it's once in a blue moon, but they *can* do it and they pat themselves like mad on the back, whereas we'd routinely do it three or four times a year. At the BBC quality was routine.

As soon as I left the BBC I got totally wrapped up in the DOCTOR WHO play. I seem to go in five year cycles; I like working for the BBC but I also like being freelance. These days I really enjoy not having to go into an office and worry about finance and budgets and that kind of thing, and not being concerned with anything but writing.

THE ULTIMATE ADVENTURE was patchy in some ways - a bit of a pantomime! It was done on a fairly low budget, and they didn't have enough time in rehearsal. During the opening fortnight in Wimbledon the public were really paying to see the rehearsals because they still hadn't got the show into shape. I was still rewriting the end of Act 2 which had to *start* in the TARDIS. The Doctor was captured at the end of Act 1. In Act 2 he has to get back to the TARDIS and escape. I couldn't see how we could start Act 2 in the TARDIS - eventually I had a Dalek saying 'Take them to the TARDIS and execute them there'! The audience seemed to swallow it! Towards the end of its second week the show took shape and it really worked very well, with packed houses on Fridays and Saturdays. The audience gave Jon a standing ovation and it was all a very sentimental occasion. I think it worked and was a success in its own terms.

Ever since *Seven Keys to Doomsday* (*1974/75*) there had been talk on and off about doing a DOCTOR WHO play again. I heard from my agent that Mark Furness - a very practical and down to earth theatre producer with a lot of experience - was looking into getting the rights from the BBC. Around December 1988 I finally heard that it was quite likely to happen and Mark asked me to go along and see him. We sat and talked about the play, how he saw it and the things he wanted. We hit it off really well and he obviously liked my approach to things. Then nothing happened for a long, long period. I think, from what Mark Furness told me later, he had been under pressure from the DOCTOR WHO production office to use other writers (*Ben Aaronovitch* and *Andrew Cartmel*) who hadn't worked out.

I eventually got a call from my agent saying 'Mark Furness has called, very apologetic, and said if your feelings aren't too hurt would you mind doing it after all?' When I went to see him he was *very* apologetic. He told me 'I always wanted you to do it, I knew you were the right person, but there were other political factors. Would you do it now?' They had Wimbledon booked, a director, the Flying Ballet, a guillotine scene, this that and the other. They had everything but the play, and they were going into rehearsal in a few weeks!

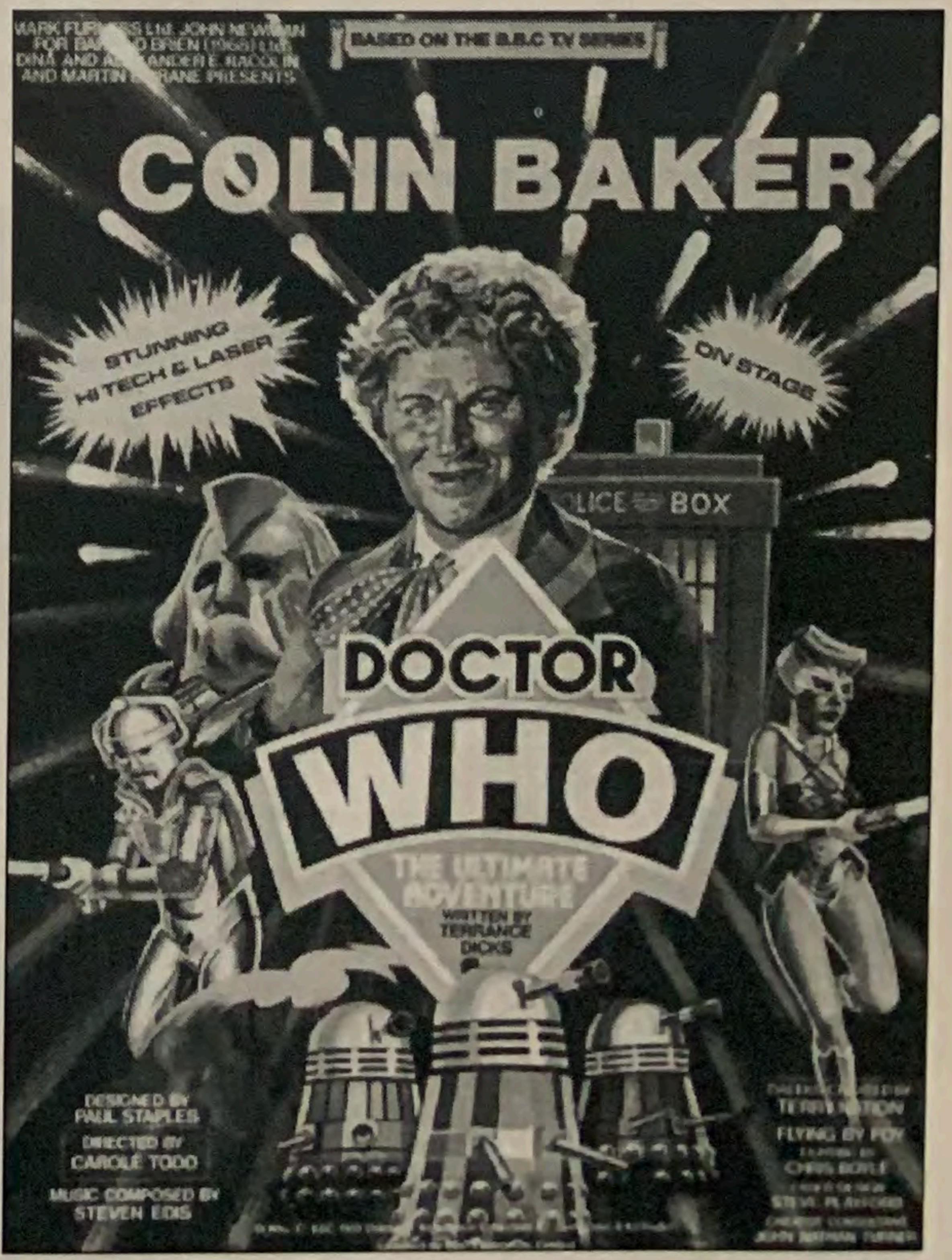
Mark Furness had lots of 'producer ideas'. He wanted the guillotine sequence which he'd seen somewhere and he wanted some flying sequences because he'd seen *Peter Pan*. He would also make suggestions like, 'Wouldn't it be nice if the Doctor picked up this cuddly little alien from somewhere and took him along...', hence Zog. He described an illusion which he'd seen of a meteorite storm projected onto a screen, which I incorporated into the play. I spoke to the guy who was doing the lasers, and he said they could do a tunnel of light coming out at the audience. It's a matter of having all these ideas hurtling at you from all directions and making sense of it all. I used to say 'I hope to God Mark doesn't see a really good troop of trained seals!' That never quite happened but almost everything else did! In lots of ways it was like writing *The Five Doctors* (*1983*). It's the sort of thing I don't mind doing and it's quite fun. There was a lot of stuff I wouldn't necessarily have had in it, like the love song and the cuddly alien. The one song that I did like very much was the mercenaries' song *Business is Business*, a really good production number.

Mark didn't know, at that stage, whether it was necessary or even desirable to do the show with one of the old Doctors. He knew that we'd created our own Doctor at the Adelphi in 1974 and, from the producer's point of view, that's got a lot of advantages; you won't have to pay the actor so much, he won't give you any trouble because he probably won't be so well known, and you can take the show where you want independently. Although we had done a play without Jon in the Seventiess, that was only because Jon was then playing the Doctor on television.

I said if it came down to it we could create our own Doctor because he is, basically, always the same character and the actor's personality is really the icing on the cake, but if we *could* get Jon it would be a huge advantage to the production. If Jon didn't want to do it then Colin Baker was around. Besides, I love working with Jon because he was my Doctor when I was script editing. However, I felt that we could only make the show work with our own Doctor as long as we got the Daleks.

First of all I did a very detailed synopsis which enabled them to then go ahead and book people. A copy was sent to Jon very early

Jon Pertwee, Graeme Smith, Rebecca Thornhill and Zog (*The Ultimate Adventure*, 1989)



James Matthews, Wendy Padbury and Trevor Martin (*The Seven Keys to Doomsday*, 1974)

on and he phoned me up in a great panic saying 'This is full of fights and all kinds of things!' I told him not to worry and that things would happen around him. He suggested booking Terry Walsh for the fight sequences because he and Terry always got on very well. Although Jon was the centre of the fights and stunts in the Bar Galactica, we did it so that he just gave a casual flip of the wrist and people went flying through the air. You can't ask Jon to do somersaults or smash through glass and that sort of thing at his time of life! I passed on Terry's name to Mark Furness saying that it would be very reassuring for Jon to have people to work with that he knew and is happy with.

As always there were prolonged negotiations to get the Daleks, which eventually came to fruition. I remember saying to Mark, 'If you can't get the Daleks we'll do it with the Cybermen'. It would have worked with the Cybermen as long as we had Jon. There are various permutations and combinations, and the ideal was the one we got; Jon, the Cybermen and the Daleks. If we'd lost one of those three we could probably still have coped, as long as we didn't lose two. I was told all along I could certainly have the Cybermen, and it was my idea to have the Daleks and Cybermen as allies. I knew that there were also going to be a mixture of alien races in the bar. I think it's quite a nice idea to have the odd renegade Draconian turned mercenary!

The trouble with Daleks is their dialogue is very limited. The Emperor Dalek obviously has higher grade speech circuits so you can use him as a character which is why I wanted him. We went to the BBC Radiophonic Workshop where we spent a very long day with Dick Mills recording all the voices and sound effects. Steve Regis, who did the music, copied them all onto a digital recorder and so we had all those sounds on file when they were needed.

I also suggested old companions in the earlier stages, but again I think Mark had fairly clear ideas. He wanted an attractive young man and a girl who was a singer because he wanted a couple of songs in it. I didn't write them but I knew there were a couple of points where they were going to be. You've got to face the fact that you don't do a mass entertainment show aimed just at fans. You hope to keep enough in so that the fans won't scorn it because the good will of the fans will have a lot to do with the success of the play, but equally you've got to realise that mothers with little kids and all kinds of people are going to be coming to see the show and you've got to have something for them. If it had been purely up to me I wouldn't have put songs in it, but I always took it as part of my brief that they were going to be.

When it was all agreed that it was actually going ahead there was really very little time - one was talking about weeks rather than months when you normally think of writing a stage play in terms of a year or six months at least.

The only thing we changed when Colin came in were the jokes. It is a great regret of mine that I never saw Colin in it, I very much wanted to and I hear he was very good. However he had a different style of humour and he liked those terrible puns - 'It was a secret told to me by an old Swami who dwelt by a river...You must have heard of the Swami River?' - for instance! That was written specially for him, but otherwise there weren't many changes.

The Seven Keys to Doomsday I did in 1974 at the Adelphi Theatre in London. An actor called Trevor Martin played the Doctor and it ran for a short season. It did pretty well but never toured, and it was such a big, spectacular production that they never got their money back. But it was very successful with lovely reviews in *The Guardian*, *Times*, etc.

I think *The Seven Keys to Doomsday* was probably better as a pla because I had a chance to conceive it from the beginning and ther weren't so many pressures. It was a more straightforward dram and less pantomime. It came about because two new theatrical pr ducers, Anthony Pye-Jeary and his partner - who are still around bumped into them in a West End restaurant the other day - g permission from the BBC to put on a DOCTOR WHO play. I gue everyone thought I was the obvious person to do it because I w script editor, and I was doing the novelisations - I was *the* W writer at the time! We particularly wanted the Daleks, especially we couldn't have a Doctor. Patrick wouldn't do it and Jon was ti up, so they were always a kind of inbuilt thing from the beginnin The designer wanted to create their own monster rather than ju use someone else's. I suggested the Clawrantula in general ter but the credit for how it actually looks goes to the designer.

They cast Wendy Padbury as someone who was associated wi the series, and she was very good. The Daleks were built special because they had to be bigger to work on stage.

I HAVE NOW written more non-DOCTOR WHO books tha DOCTOR WHO books. I have over 100 children's books i print, over half of which are books for younger children which is where the market is - the 8-12 and 12-15 age group. work for four or five different publishers all under my own name. With the television show you have the effect of the whole of the medium - the lighting, actors, sound effects, special effects, etc. - but with the book you simply have the effect of the words on the page in the mind of the reader. I see the task of the novelization as reproducing the effect of watching the TV show in the reader's head. Sometimes, with no budgetary restrictions, you can even improve on it. It's also easier to convey in prose what people are feeling and thinking. On-screen voice-overs and so on always seemed to me to be a little clumsy. As a scriptwriter I never liked to use them.

I used to get most fun adapting the work of particular writers like Bob Baker and Dave Martin or Bob Holmes, where the material was especially good. In some of the later scripts I used to find a great number of inconsistencies. There's a kind of enjoyment in ironing things like that out and making it all coherent.

I have no aspirations to do a large format Who book - it's too much like hard work! I did one of those with Mac Hulke. He was always the inspiration behind those because he loved gathering information and facts and interviewing people. It really is a slog doing that if you're going to do it well. With Mac I did *The Making Of Doctor Who* and an updated version and that was it. And then people like Jean-Marc L'Officier came along to do *The Programme Guide*. He enjoys researching all that stuff whereas I hate being tied down to real facts. I much prefer making it all up!

By and large, any Doctor Who book sells as well as any other because people who buy them tend to buy the whole range. *The Five Doctors* did particularly well because that came out close to the time of the show and it was a special event. Otherwise I'd say anything with Daleks probably performs slightly better. But the great thing about the Doctor Who range, when it was in its prime, was that they were all bestsellers. They would print whatever they printed of copies and they would sell them out immediately and they would quickly print a second edition. And they did, for a long time, have an absolute automatic guaranteed bestseller. A writer gets an advance against royalties and you don't get paid any more until the books have earned out the advance they've already paid you.

> *" There is now more of a chance that Doctor Who will come back with Alan Yentob as Controller of BBC1. People say that Jonathan Powell hated Who, which just wasn't true. He didn't hate it, he just wasn't interested in it. He didn't care about it one way or the other"*

I always say there's a catch-22 in becoming a writer; you can't sell books until you're well-known, and you can't get well-known until you've sold books. Doctor Who gave me an enormous boost at that stage of my career because I was then established as a writer of a best-selling series. Therefore it was comparatively easy for me to sell books to other publishers and I'm now pretty well established as a children's writer, in England certainly, and I'm very grateful for that.

After I did the last two gaps in the schedule - *The Smugglers* and *The Space Pirates* - there wasn't much of a gap between those and being asked to write for The New Adventures. Writing for Sylvester wasn't really a problem for me. Sylvester may be wearing a different body but the character is actually the same. It was Ace I didn't know so much about. I bought the video of *The Curse of Fenric* to try to get the feeling of Ace's character, and people seem to think that it worked. They have said it is one of the best Ace stories. I'm glad *Exodus* has been accepted by the fans - I hear it came top in a recent poll for best New Adventures.

I was under a lot of pressure from Virgin to finish it in time to slot in to the first four. The New Adventures are much harder to write than the novelisations because you are facing a blank sheet of paper. The books are also three times as long. To save time I decided to write about a period I already knew. The Nazi period is one I've always been interested in, a fascinating period historically. What people forget about the Nazis is that they were such crooks and gangsters. It was like having the Kray brothers as joint Prime Ministers running the country. The other thing that had always fascinated me was the narrowness in which we won, or didn't lose, the Second World War. After Dunkirk, if Germany had invaded they would have won, no doubt about it. Hitler issued a direct order to stop the advancing tanks and he halted them before Dunkirk. Nobody knows why! They *could* have invaded but, for some reason or other, they hung about and, thank God, decided to invade Russia instead (which is rough on the Russians but saved our bacon), and we managed to hang on until the Americans came in.

I always thought that was a turning point in history, and I thought 'What if...?' - as Mac Hulke used to say - 'What if they *had* invaded after Dunkirk?' All that occupied Britain stuff, Nazis in The Savoy, is a very colourful concept...the best version of it ever is a novel by Len Deighton called S.S.G.B., a detective story set in occupied Britain on precisely the same premise. I wanted a chance to deal with that concept too. I set the book in an alternate time stream.

I think Peter Darvill-Evans has done an excellent job to get the series established and selling well. After *Blood Harvest* I've talked to Peter about doing one of The Missing Adventures, a Pertwee obviously. They pose more of a problem because they are not like the novelisations which you can do in a continuous stream. They have to be inserted into the Who-niverse. Although it works sticking to Sylvester, I'm sure The Missing Adventures will do well. I'm sure there is a market for new Troughton stories, Hartnell stories, and Pertwee stories in my case, or with Tom whose particular Doctor I started on Robot.

Apart from the Who books and children's books, I've developed a line in non-fiction. I've just done a book about Parliament, so I've been steadily busy. There's always been one job leading on to another. After *Blood Harvest* I'm contracted to do two non-Who books which will take me up to the end of the year, then, please God, something else will come along. Maybe I'll be working on Who again.

There is now more of a chance that Doctor Who will come back with Alan Yentob as Controller of BBC1. People said that Jonathan Powell hated Who, which just wasn't true. He didn't hate it, he just wasn't interested in it. He didn't care about it one way or the other. He wasn't out to get it or destroy it, he just wasn't bothered by it. If Doctor Who had been doing well and was a success he would have left it alone, and when it wasn't he didn't mind seeing it go. He didn't have strong feelings either way. Alan Yentob does seem to have more sympathy for the series and a better appreciation of its worth. I think the continuing level of fan interest is impressive too - it makes the BBC see Who's worth as a still-viable TV concept.

Barry and I were saying that if the BBC comes to its senses and they ring us up and say 'Would you like to put it on?', we'd be very pleased." ❑

- **Interviewed by Sheldon Collins and Gary Leigh in March 1989 and Randall D. Larson in April 1990. Updated October 1993.**

Michael E. Briant

"William Hartnell was convinced that the TARDIS actually flew" - 29th November 1985

"WHEN I was 11 years old I had polio and spent nine months in hospital. I came out with a slightly weak leg and saw it as an oppurtunity to blackmail my parents into letting me go to a drama school. At the age of twelve I walked into Italia Conti in September and in October I was rehearsing for a Christmas show called *Where the Rainbow Ends*, which was quite famous in its day. From then I never really stopped — I spent more time working than I did at school!

I came to the conclusion, around the age of twenty, that I probably wasn't the best actor in the world. I saw a job advertised at the BBC — one month's holiday relief as an assistant floor manager for £800 a year. At that point I was selling soap powder for about twice the amount an AFM was paid but I hated it. The BBC offered me the job, I did my month, that month turned into three months, and then I became an AFM on the staff.

***The Sea Devils*, 1972**

The Daleks (1963/4)...

That was as a trainee AFM during the first month or so that I was at the Corporation. (Training is very well organised nowadays, but then you were sent to various shows for two or three days at a time). I wandered into the rehearsal room and helped Michael Ferguson, who was the AFM. Never having worked backstage in television it was quite strange to see something you were actually in the rehearsal room for then going out at the weekend.

The Crusade (1965)...

That was pretty near the beginning of Douglas Camfield's directing career (he had been a production assistant on DOCTOR WHO from the start). Dougie took the show very, very seriously, as he took all his work. He became the greatest living expert at that moment in the Crusades and investigated it at great, great length. He made sure that everything we were doing had some historical truth.

He was a great military man and very much into having people tortured and eaten by ants! When it came to it, it was rather difficult to find ants, and in the end I got them from London Zoo. It was sad, really — quite a lot of them perished in the honey! They either drowned or ate so much honey that they just bloated and exploded!

The Daleks' Master Plan (1965/6)...

In those days, as I said, the training was different. One day you were an AFM and the next day you walked in and you were a production manager (or production assistant). I just remember that as being incredibly hard work. Dougie was terribly well-organised as always but he was exhausted by the end of it, I think we all were. I think that in the end it wasn't a bad show, but it might have been a better one had we not had to do it all, but very happy days.

The Power of the Daleks (1966)...

Christopher Barry was another director I'd worked with an awful lot (I'd been his AFM on SMUGGLERS BAY). Dear old Bil Hartnell, he was very proud o the Doctor. If you asked him to press the wrong wooden button to take-off the TARDIS, he'd say, 'Oh! It'll never take-off if you do that! This is a proper procedure — you press *that* wooden button. If you operate the TARDIS like that, Michael, you're absolutely stupid!' But the bloody contro panel looked exactly the same all the way round! It was a real hoot William Hartnell was convinced that the TARDIS actually flew!

DOCTOR WHO, as a show, has proved that it is the character — Doctor Who —that's important, and is bigger than any one actor. I think that's probably why it's run for so long. DOCTOR WHO is a fine concept and no one actor who has played the lead role has been the definitive Doctor. Bill believed he was the only actor in the world who could play Doctor Who and he was wrong — they've *all* been marvellous.

Fury from the Deep (1968)...

The requirement was that we had to have all this foam coming up from out of the oil-rigs. The real oil-rigs would not let us film at all, so we ended up using these forts in the Thames Estuary. Hugh David, the director, wanted the TARDIS to materialise on the sea, the idea being that we floated the police-box model on the sea surface. But it didn't float, it just flopped over — we just couldn't make it stand up! I'd really spent a lot of time working out the budget on this story and cutting back on everything so we could have helicopters on the show, and the helicopter pilot, Mike Smith, said, 'Why don't we attach piano wire to the top of the TARDIS and I'll just hover and hold the TARDIS sitting on the sea?' Hugh agreed, so I said, 'Well, I'd better go and sit with the pilot - you tell me what you want and I'll do it' (this was only to really get yet another ride in the helicopter!).

So we took off, the TARDIS hanging below, and flew it over the sea and lowered it down onto the water. As soon as it landed on the water it flopped straight over on its side. We tried this a couple of times, then the pilot said he'd have to hover with it, just keeping the wire taut so it just sat on the surface. I had to talk him down because, obviously, you can't see what is directly beneath you in the driving seat of a helicopter, so I was sort of leaning out but I couldn't see anything. He said, 'You'll just have to get out of the door and stand on the skid'. Without a second thought, I climbed out of the helicopter, stood on the skid, held onto the door and said, 'Down six feet, down five feet, four, three, up six inches, steady, that's it!' I almost froze as I saw myself standing on the skid of this helicopter 150 feet above the sea with a police-box dangling underneath!

I was also a production manager on a lot of Classic serials and I think that's why I sort of drifted away from DOCTOR WHO for a while. When I did the Director's Course and I'd directed a couple of Z CARS, Barry Letts asked me to direct one and I was obviously thrilled.

Colony in Space (1971)...

I found (maybe because I was directing it) that the series had become much more serious and the stories were more adventure-orientated and true to life. *Colony in Space* was really a bit like the North and the South in America, exploiting the American homeland. American Indians were primitives to me and the IMC were the highly sophisticated people who came in to exploit their country, like South Africa. I think DOCTOR WHO was at its best when it was telling stories which did relate to today and which did say something to young people about the problems of exploiting other people.

Also the Doctor was a much more mature and serious sort of Doctor. Jon made him into an elegant, swashbuckling, charming and witty Doctor. He never used guns at that stage. He does now and that saddens me a bit. In those days, if he fought he only ever used his Aikido or his wits to enable him to win over a stronger adversary. He would never use weaponry.

I actually thought the sonic-screwdriver was a bad step, although I was partly instrumental in suggesting that was the way to undo bolts. The first time it was used (in *Fury from the Deep*), we were chatting about how the Doctor was going to escape this time, and we decided he'd get a screwdriver out and undo the lock on an inspection hatch. Then we realised that, in fact, screws are put in from the back to stop people taking the nuts out), so I said, 'I know what he does - he uses a sonic screwdriver!' It vibrated at the right interval, the screws turned around and it was a good visual effect, very easy to make, and we used that as a way to enable the Doctor to escape. I think that was probably the biggest disservice I ever did to DOCTOR WHO because of what it started off. I remember being stuck and having the blasted sonic-screwdriver blowing up land-mines and things in *The Sea Devils*. The Doctor had never done that before and I was wrong.

I think the IMC robot wasn't a great success. It was meant to be a sort of improvement on the Daleks as the original idea, but it failed. It was too big and clumsy and the blasted thing kept bashing its head!

The Sea Devils (1972)...

Filming is a very important part of any DOCTOR WHO story. Somehow I never think those without film work quite as well, and the filming on this did work very well.

The Sea Devils ended up being derived from turtles (I wanted to have lots of shots of them actually swimming under the sea, but that never happened). I had to find this creature which lived under the sea but which was also capable of coming out and walking on land, so we looked through reference books and came up with turtles as being the closest mammal to that description. Once we'd decided that they were turtles that made the whole design problem that much easier.

Roger Delgado was a lovely guy, absolutely smashing. He was such a professional actor and took the Master very, very seriously indeed. I remember, in *Colony in Space*, I'd got the idea that the TV set was going to be a wrist watch and I was inlaying a picture into Roger's wrist. He had to keep his hand still while we lined up the inlay and did it all. I remember it took something like thirty minutes, which doesn't sound very long, but thirty minutes sitting in the same position, not letting your shadow fall over the watch and not moving your hand one iota is a hell of a long time. Roger never said a word about things like that. He just sat there for half an hour, and when I'd got the shot and came down on the floor to say thanks, he said, 'It's a pleasure, an absolute pleasure', and went on to the next thing!

In *The Sea Devils* the powerboat chase was a real sweat for Roger, who got very seasick. He was very brave because he *hated* it and kept on going.

The Green Death (1973)...

They just kept asking me to come back. I think I was being offered one DOCTOR WHO per season which was just smashing!

The maggots created a whole load of problems. First of all there were supposed to be tens of thousands of them, then Katy had to wander through an area of the mine with maggots snapping at her feet. There were times when maggots had to break out of eggs and slide away, and there were maggots which had to jump on people and bite them. It seemed to me that there should be more than one solution to the whole problem. If you only use one solution people soon start seeing the cracks, whereas if you use lots of different ways then nobody's actually very sure of how you're doing it. You have to make illusions happen without people knowing it's an illusion: we had live maggots on models inlaid against backgrounds; we had puppet maggots, which literally worked with your hand up it; there were chromakey maggots which worked on sticks; we even had blown-up contraceptives as maggots! Anybody who could get in and operate them did. For example, when Katy had lots of maggots snapping at her feet, those were just glove puppets with maggot heads made of soft material and operated by lots of people through holes in the floor.

The guys had had so much trouble making the maggots that they didn't have too much time for the goddamn dragonfly! It was very delicate when it was finished and it was quite windy on those slag heaps in South Wales.

Originally the computer, BOSS, was just going to be a squeaky voice and I was going to get one of the people who usually did the funny alien voices along to do it. Then it suddenly occurred to me that the computer was so important that it was crazy to undersell it in that way, so I decided to use a ring modulator and I brought in John Dearth, who I thought was the best actor to play it. I'd first

On location for *Death to the Daleks* (1974)

Elizabeth Sladen and Ian Marter at Wookey Hole (*Revenge of the Cybermen*, 1975)

worked with him when I was fourteen years old and he taught me an awful lot about acting. It was a matter of treating it seriously, and John believed in the computer and made it into a character. We also got these lines moving up and down on the screen which were played totally in rhythm with the speech, making it almost a living thing. It could go 'Mmmm...' and you could see it 'think'.

For the final scene the script probably just said, 'Doctor Who drives away', or something. I just liked the idea of the figure going through the sunset. It took a long time to do but it was worth it.

Death to the Daleks (1974)...

It is always terribly difficult for an actor to take over a role - which is effectively what Lis Sladen was doing - from someone who has been immensely successful, but Barry cast an absolutely first-rate actress and, like all the Doctors, Lis and Katy were very different. Lis was much more quiet and sedate and was always totally, totally believable, whereas Katy would be flamboyant and big and wear outrageous clothing (I think she bought all her gear in Carnaby Street or the King's Road).

The root sequence was a very easy shot. I sometimes got worried because I didn't feel our electronic effects always looked real. It's probably obvious how it was done and it wasn't totally successful, but I think it was good enough. The instructions were to sling a cable across the gap between a cliff on one side and a cave on the other, then sling some piano wire on a block and simply bring the thing up on the piano wire. There was a problem with the piano wires in that the sun was glinting on them as they came up out of the water because they retained a certain amount of moisture.

The Daleks lived at Pinewood and BBC Enterprises used them for the exhibitions. They were never refurbished so when I inherited them they were in a pretty sad and sorry state and badly needed a new paint job. I went back to the silver scheme as I remembered them from the William Hartnell days. I'd sort of missed a generation of Daleks so I just did them like that!

I suddenly realised that in this goddamned sandpit there was just no way you could have Daleks on silent runners gliding around. One of the solutions was to put down a piece of hardboard, paint it sand-coloured and let them run around on that. But that was very limited because they had to be travelling long distances or walking along with the Doctor and his friends. The solution was to use elemac dollys, which are what you track cameras around on. With sheets of these you have a railway line, which we hired and painted yellow to match the sand (which didn't please the company when they were returned!). I had elemac dolly bases put underneath the three Daleks so you could tow them along on a piano wire out of shot or put your hand around it and walk it. This was the longest track I think I've ever seen and I had it on a bit of a slope

For the major scene you had this group of people walking along this path with three Daleks. Jon was in the lead and he set off the first Dalek, then the second, and John Abineri was to push th third Dalek. I was up on the top of this sand-dune and shoute 'Action!', and dear old Jon gave the first Dalek a hell of a push an got it running down the track (up to now he'd been on the flat an had never pushed it down a slope before). Then he got the secon one going, and from up there looking down all I could see were these Daleks vanishing at a hundred miles an hour down the tracks! The operators couldn't get their feet down because of this elemac track and the front Dalek started shaking from side to side and a little voice from inside was shouting 'Help!' I fell down laughing as John Scott Martin careered off the end of the track at about thirty miles an hour and crashed! I shouted, 'Are you okay?', and before he could say anything the next two Daleks came catapulting into him! He was fine, but we soon decided that Daleks on elemac track going downhill aren't terribly safe!

Revenge of the Cybermen (1975)...

We got the remaining couple of Cybermen out of store and they were absolutely knackered and looked desperately old-fashioned. You could see they were old bits of plastic tubing and everything else, but what was okay seven years ago really wouldn't do now. While remaking them, I couldn't understand the logic of Cybermen carrying their guns in their hands because they're not human beings, they're machines, so why not have a gun element built in? We thought about the chest and so on but the helmet seemed the logical place to put the gun. I thought we could use exactly the same technology as the Sea Devils' guns which had worked well, but they could only fire one shot at a time and it took about ten minutes to reload, so we decided to make the guns four-shooters.

It was difficult for Tom as he was doing what was originally a Jo Pertwee script. There was no particular policy as to how he shou play the Doctor, but it was quite worrying because Tom knew wanted to be his 'own' Doctor and re-create the role. I'd got script which called for an 'action-packed' Doctor and it was a re problem because I wasn't sure exactly what he wanted to do, b the fact that he, Ian and Lis got on so well was wonderful, and did ease the problem.

You've heard all the stories about the ghost of Wookey Hole a of Lis almost drowning, but I actually think, in retrospect, that were suffering from a form of oxygen starvation. A film crew about sixty to seventy people strong and to fit that many peop into a cave that has no natural air supply is asking for trouble, a you will start having accidents and making mistakes because y are suffering from a lack of air.

The Robots of Death (1977)...

I think the script ended up working very well indeed. I was suffe ing possibly from having done too many DOCTOR WHOS, and think the designer (Ken Sharp) was in a similar situation. You act ally started to say, 'Oh, no! Not *another* set of robots!' The could've been like the IMC robot or the Daleks or th Cybermen...they were just *robots*! I really just got exhausted with and didn't know what to do.

Ken and I found out that open-cast mining was being done down in Cornwall, and the first thing we saw when we got there was this great big scoop. We had to think of a way to move vast quantities of sand and I thought of big, very high-powered water jets; in comes all the rock, the ore, the sand and everything, water then carries it along to a central point where great metal scoops sort it all out.

As for the inside of the ship, Ken just felt he could not face any more silver walls again. He'd done it all before. I said, 'Well, I suppose it doesn't have to be silver walls, white costumes and space-suits and all that. We could possibly have any decor we liked'. Then we decided that if you've got robots to do all the work for you, you could dress yourself in any costume you liked because you didn't have to wear working outfits or protective gear.

Then we came to the robots themselves, and following the idea through I said I quite fancied the idea of Greek robots! Then Ken snapped his fingers and shouted, 'Art deco - It's got to be art deco!' We decided that *everything* would be in art deco. Why not? Why always have robots looking like the Tin Man? Why not have them so that they fit in with the surroundings and are attractive? We wanted the most beautiful robot, very elegant, in a nice costume and looking as if it fitted in with the surroundings. Ken proceeded to study art deco books and went on board the Queen Mary which was made in art deco style.

I thought the character of Leela was awfully good and worked particularly well in those surroundings. You had all this sophistication, all this elegance, and then you had this female savage in leather skins - a very beautiful lady with very basic instincts.

AFTER *The Robots of Death* I was working at Yorkshire Television. I would dearly have loved to have come back and done another one but I was always doing other things. I remember Graham Williams getting very cross with me: 'You've got to come and do another Doctor Who, I absolutely *insist*!'...and gradually Doctor Who producers stopped phoning me up, it's as simple as that. I'm a great believer that you can't organise your life. All you can do is roll with it.

Barry Letts giving me the oppurtunity to do *Colony in Space* was probably the biggest single factor in my career. As a very young and inexperienced director who had just done the BBC training course, to be given a six-part serial where you had total control of all the cast, all the costumes, all the set deign, all the effects and everything was absolutely make or break. It was so frightening and daunting.

Doctor Who is not a show where you are paid to come in, do the job, photograph it as normal and walk away from it. For me, it was a show where you were paid to come in and try things out and experiment. I don't think anybody would have thanked a director for coming into the show and just doing the same things, story after story after story.

Doing Doctor Who was really the hardest job in the business. It's such a tough show to do that if you can actually walk in and do a six-parter, then you're never really afraid of anything after that. Doctor Who taught me how to deal with effects and all the technical side, then it taught me how to work with actors and how to understand them. Doctor Who taught me the art of the impossible.

To have worked on one of the best shows in television, and one of the most complicated, leaves me obviously with a debt to it." ❑

● **Interviewed by Tim Collins**

● **Postscript:** *Around '85 I started a film production company with business start up finances of £1.5 million pounds organised by a government group called ICFC. I made two (very low budget) movies - Tangier in Morocco and Send in the Lions in Spain. We eventually went bust and I returned to freelance directing. I directed a lot of the second season of One by One, which was wonderful to work on but perhaps less compelling to view. Directing lions, tigers, baboons, elephants and camels, and working with exciting circus people like Jimmy Clubb and Sally Chipperfield, was almost as much fun as directing Who. The art of making the impossible seem to happen.*

Shortly after that I directed a six-part one-hour thriller series - all on film on location - called Hideaway with Ken Hutchison, Clare Higgins, Tony Selby, Gabby Anwar and Ron Moody. It is one of the best things I've made and I am very proud of it. Sadly it was completed about the time Mary Whitehouse/politicians were having a major go about sex and violence, so Hideaway - which had a lot of both - was transmitted late at night in the middle of the week with no publicity. I'm glad to say it was very well received by those who saw it and it developed into quite a 'cult' series.

The next job, I think, was a series of Howard's Way, which was interesting as my greatest love after directing is sailing. I have kept sail boats on my Hamble River moorings for the last eighteen years, doing the normal cruising circuit in the Solent with trips to Cherburg, St. Vaast, St. Malo and the Channel Islands five or six times a year. Six episodes of Howard's Way left me certain that too much knowledge is a killer. I enjoyed the show but found, sometimes, that knowing how it really happens is not very helpful.

***The Robots of Death* (1977)**

Then I went to YTV to direct a set of Emmerdae with dear Frazer Hines, with whom I first worked 100 years ago when I was an ASM at the BBC. Frazer was a young actor playing the lead in Moonfleet (Tx. title Smugglers Bay), with Patrick Troughton playing one of the pirates and Christopher Barry directing. I remember, on the very first day of filming at Ealing Studios, Frazer arrived with his right hand swathed in bandages having pushed it through the glass of a french window the night before. To make matters worse, Frazer's character had to spend the entire time climbing up and down a rope ladder in a well! Inevitably his hands got into close shot so it was decided to put sticking plaster on each finger separately and iust keep renewing them as the blood seeped through. As a very young ASM, I was dispatched to buy up the local chemist's supply of condoms which were rolled over each finger and then covered in makeup (I had a very red face and I think the chemist was rather surprised at the quantity!).

During Emmerdale I got a phone call asking me to go to Amsterdam to set up and direct a thriller series in Dutch. The job was to last for four months so, as not to miss the summer sailing I jumped into Lizelle - my Elizabethan 31 sail boat - and, with the help of my son, we sailed her to Dover, then along the French, Belgium and Dutch coasts to Ijmuiden, then up the North Sea Canal to Amsterdam.

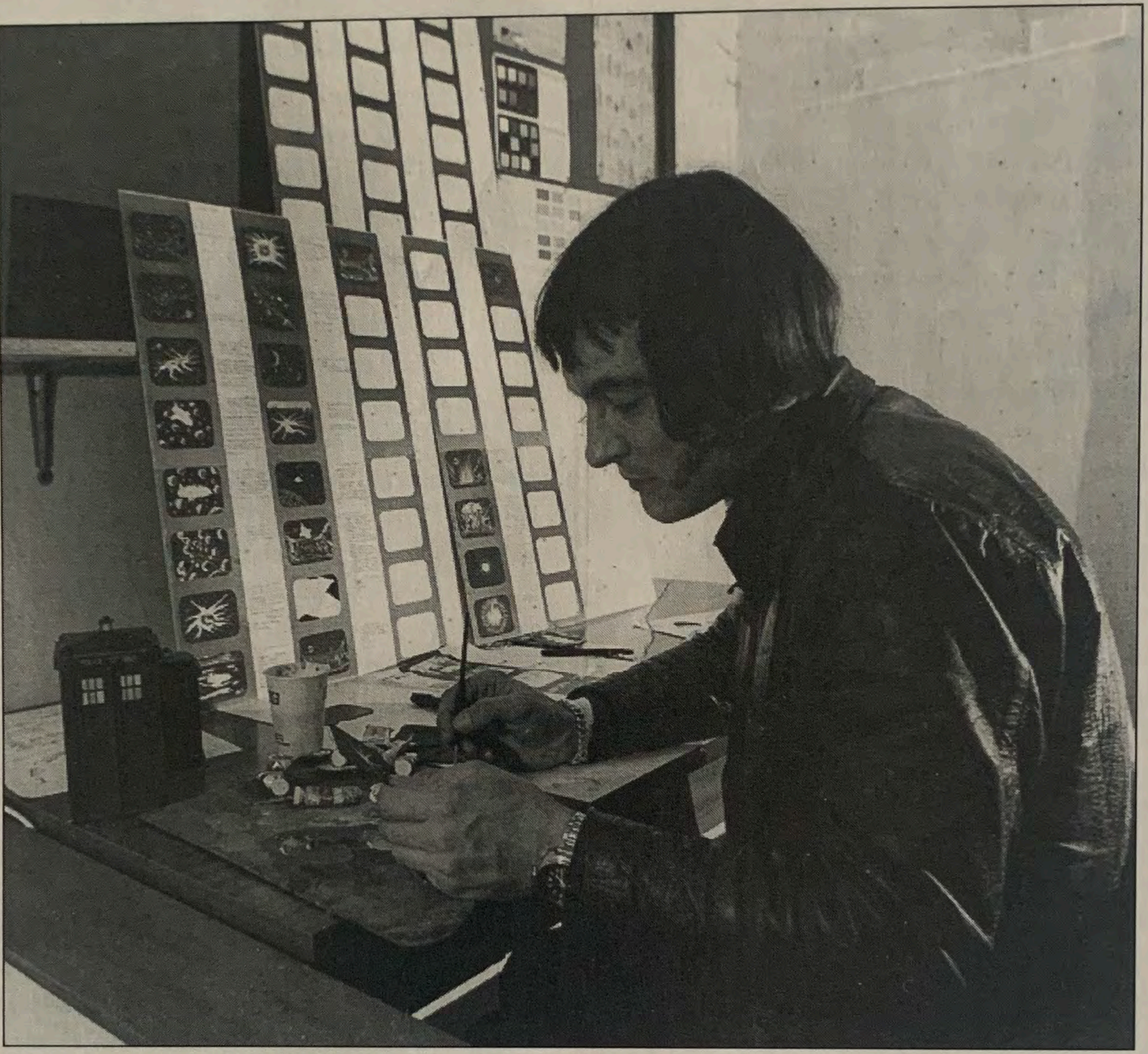
In the Spring I finished the series and motored Lizelle down the rivers and Canals of Europe to France and Spain. Wonderful trip. Then I got another call to go back and make another 26 episodes of this drama series as it had been so successful. About this time I was bored with hotels and business flats so I bought myself a houseboat on a canal in the middle of Amsterdam where I lived for the next three years. Then I was asked to select some British situation comedy series, buy the scripts and show the actors and technicians how to make situation comedy before a studio audience. I produced and directed 30+ episodes of The Two of Us and After Henry (strangely we won lots of awards for best drama!). But they were funny, I promise. Lots of people in the studio audience laughed.

After four years in Holland I decided I must get back to the UK for a while. I arrived shortly before Christmas and I am currently working on a script about some strange events on a North Sea Island which I hope to complete in the next few weeks and am very excited about... - ***Michael Briant, January 1994***

1972 **the designers** 1979

Ian Scoones

“K9 would get the shit kicked out of him by Tom in rehearsals” - April 1991



Storyboarding *The Invisible Enemy* (1977)

“I STARTED in the business with Bowie Films in 1960. Most of Les Bowie’s work at that time was for Hammer Films, which was the studio I wished to get into. Les was the father of so many of us in the visual effects business. He loved film and he had enthusiasm right up until the day he died, whereas so many other effects people just wanted the money and ran.

I started working on *The Day the Earth Caught Fire* and I was his general dogsbody come teaboy for about the next four years, but I was learning all the time. There were several of us learning the ropes, including Nicky Allder, Brian Johnson, Neil Swan and Alan Barnard (I was always given the ‘lovely’ jobs because I was ‘the boy’!). No script would be passed by the producer if he thought it would be too expensive so they were always run-of-the-mill effects, but I was totally in awe at everything going on around me. I was almost silent for ten years because I was so afraid to ask a question and be made to feel a total fool!

Les’ ambition was to have his own film company, and at the time Gerry Anderson was going from strength to strength doing FOUR FEATHER FALLS, FIREBALL XL5, SUPERCAR, etc. and needed to expand. They had a bigger budget allocated to THUNDERBIRDS so they moved into bigger buildings further up into the industrial estate in Slough. Suddenly AP Films (Gerry Anderson’s studio) was vacant so we moved in and Les Bowie continued renting it, and we were literally ten minutes drive away from Hammer at Bray (there wasn’t so much traffic then!). This gave us scope to learn a lot more and to experiment with effects.

Hammer wasn’t in production all the time, so Les would ‘sack’ all his boys when nothing was happening and get back in touch with us when something cropped up. One day he suggested we go to Gerry’s studio - which was only a mile away - and see what work was available, and I became a second unit director for THUNDERBIRDS for six episodes - my first credits - at the age of twenty-four. Derek Meddings by then was firmly entrenched as effects supervisor and Bob Bell was the art director.

One episode would be completed in ten days, including Saturdays and Sundays and usually working late into the evening till about 10.30pm. We literally *lived* THUNDERBIRDS. We never had time to spend the small pittance Gerry paid us, which he got around by bringi in what he called ‘sp cialists’ which were available from the r of the union.

I left Bowie Films 1969 and joined t BBC as part of a ma expansion within t Visual Effec Department at th time, straight fro having worked on *The Battle Of Britain*, which nearly every effe man in the business did. Also there was Tony Harding and, lat Richard Conway from THUNDERBIRDS. We all knew t THUNDERBIRDS ‘technique’ and applied that to the rather old-fas ioned way of doing things at the BBC to try to give it mo realism.

They had this strange system at the BBC for interviewing poten-tial employees. You meet a board of about six people sitting at this table, and Jack Kine was there to assess you. The others were these grey, faceless BBC people assessing you to see if you’re a ‘suitable person for the Corporation’, which I found terribly snobbish.

I started at the bottom again. There were about ten FX designers when I started, including Michael-John Harris, Peter Day and the late Ron Oates. We were under Jack Kine and Bernard Wilkie, who acted as a double-headed eagle; Jack was the ideas man and Bernard was the one who worked it all out. Jack was basically a scenic artist turned effects man and Bernard an engineer turned effects man. They did all the effects work for the BBC during the early Fifties until gradually the department started to expand and employ more people. They wanted people with outside experience in all fields, which upset the ones who were already there, so it wasn’t a very happy first few months.

I got a commission on the model side straight away, which again upset everybody. Jack said, 'Ian is a model man so he'll do all the miniatures for the next two years on all the Doctor Whos', but that idea was changed because there were a lot of other designers who were only doing floor stuff who also wanted to do model work. However I did do the model work for a few Doctor Whos without a credit, and then went on to credited work. There was a board up in the department and whoever became available would go onto it, so if a job came in the designer would take the assistant's name off. It wasn't until much later you could actually choose your own show, so you went on to anything with anybody; Crackerjack, The Generation Game, I even did The Goodies with John Horton down in Jersey which was the huge Magic Roundabout pastiche!

***The Space Pirates* (1969)**

The designer on *The Space Pirates* (*1969*) was John Horton, a brilliant designer who had worked on *2001: A Space Odyssey* and who had established himself at the BBC by the time I arrived. He was a great inventor and I worked under him.

I was also involved with Doomwatch (*Tomorrow, The Rat, 1970*) with other designers using mechanical rats. I wasn't actually involved on the effects side and so wasn't credited. The rats were operated by bicycle brake cables to make their metallic mouths open and close. Some had animatronic heads and revolved and others had movable front paws. Tony Oxley was the designer and mentor of that very early and quite crude form of mechanics, but it worked.

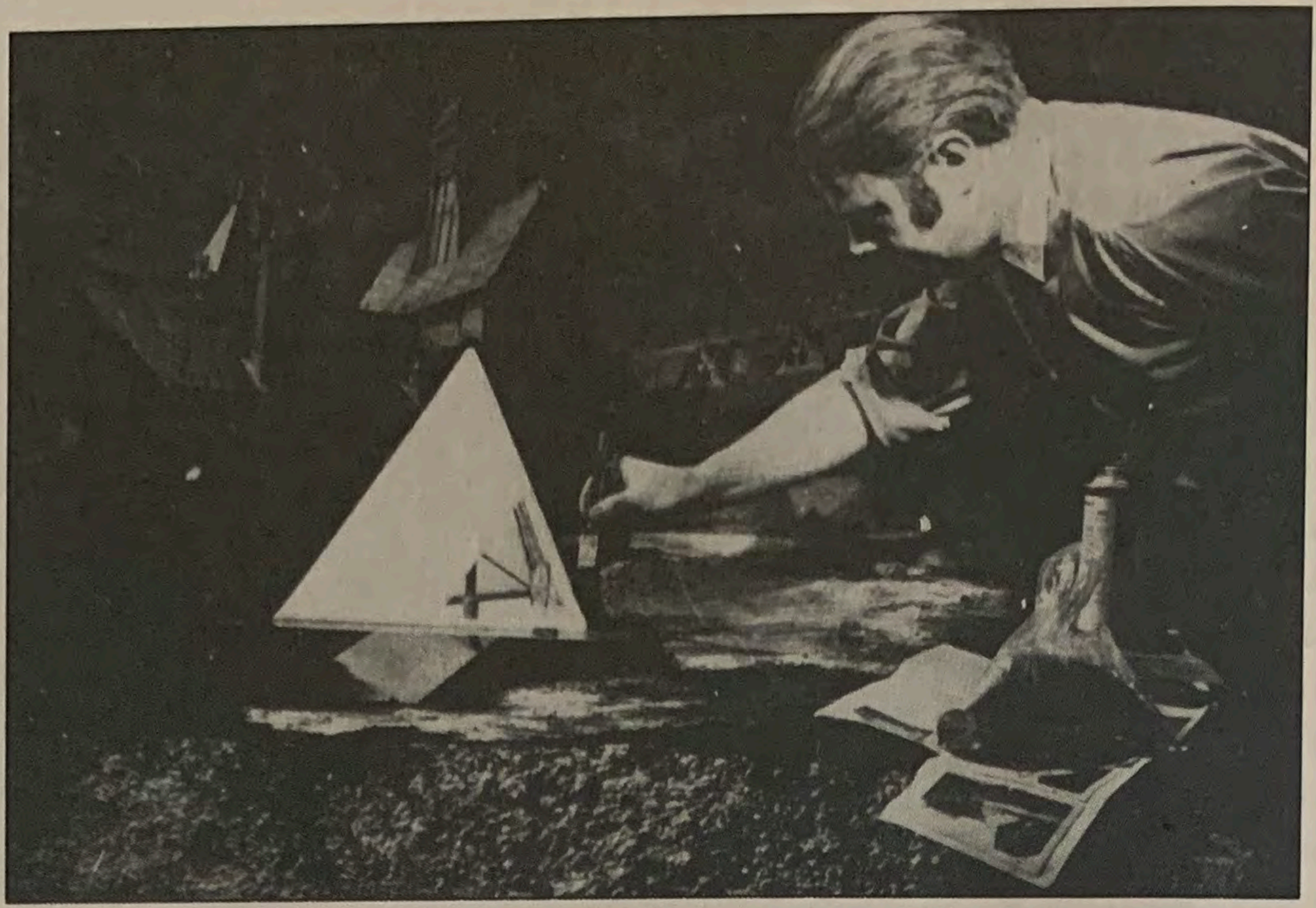
The Curse of Peladon (*1972*), my first Doctor Who story as designer, was the first time I tried to expand the BBC's knowledge by setting the sequence out as a storyboard. This was to give everyone, particularly the director, an instant understanding of what I had in mind for the sequence of the TARDIS toppling over the cliff, which worked very well. I brought Mike Wilson in from Thunderbirds to light it, but when the union found out that we'd used a non-BBC person they banned us from doing it again. I said, 'Right, we'll do it the other way around instead; they can't stop me going to another studio and hiring the people and equipment I need', so after that I sometimes took a team over to some of the smaller sound stages at Bray to shoot miniature sequences.

I built the cliff-face set at the 'Puppet Theatre', which was so-called because they used to do some of the Muffin The Mules there. In reality it was a no-man's land between studios four and five at Television Centre, which the BBC had moved to after leaving its original TV studios at Alexandra Palace. I had been given the job of trying to make it into a working studio and I lived there for a time because I tended to work on my own in the evenings till about ten, and that meant that I had no interference from anybody else and I could do what I wanted to do. I wasn't being paid for it after 5:00pm, but I didn't mind because it was very much like painting a picture to me; money doesn't come into it, it's something fulfilling and rewarding. So that was where I built the Peladon set, though it wasn't as big as it looks but we used a wide-angle lens to shoot it.

I also designed Arcturus because it was a mechanical effect with water being pumped around it. It was this hideous, green-headed, skull-like thing, and they went and gave it this silly little squeaky voice! I wanted to scare the pants off the kiddies and get Mary Whitehouse running to the phone, but if something was horrific they would always back peddle and try and make it less shocking, as they also did with

(Centre) Experimenting on Doomwatch (*Tomorrow, the Rat,* 1970). (Above) Working with Bernard Wilkie on the BBC's ill-fated Quatermas 4 in the mid-70s

Tom Baker and Lis Sladen by the Sarcophagus (*Pyramids of Mars*, 1975)



The model set from *Pyramids of Mars*, 1975

Alpha Centauri which was designed by costume.

Barry Letts was a very sympathetic man and a good producer to work for. Of course, as all producers would do, he'd often say, 'This sounds wonderful...if you could keep the money down then go ahead, let's see it'. He was one of those dedicated sort of producers who would have open days at Ealing with film cameramen to try and show what we could do electronically with new techniques and what we could do on film. I remember making lots of models that were just set pieces for these little seminars which would be attended by other people in the BBC, usually other producers who could well be given shows like DOCTOR WHO. In a way it was to prepare them for the shock of walking into a technically complex show and thinking 'My God, this is out of my control' (it's a bit off-putting if you're a producer going into a studio for the first time and everything is blue and your actor's wearing a blue hand or maybe a blue head!).

'Mad' Mitch Mitchell would look after the electronic side; he'd be up in the gallery one moment and on the floor pushing a cameraman out of the way and saying 'No, do it this way' the next. He got away with it because he was very highly respected and a very clever guy. It would be decided at an early production meeting which bits he was going to do as electronic effects and which bits we were going to do (mechanical, atmospherics, etc.).

Talking of creative people, I was very sad when Douglas Camfield died. Down here in Rochester we have a famous hotel called The Bull, which is mentioned in many of the Dickensian novels, and they were doing a DOCTOR WHO just across the water from here (*Inferno, 1970*). One evening after they'd finished filming, Dougie was there playing his guitar and keeping everybody amused till about 3 or 4.00am, and still getting up and directing in the morning! He had a pace-maker as you probably know; most people have one fitted to keep their heart going, but his was to slow him down because his heartbeat was twice as high as the average man's and he was burning his life up twice as quickly.

Around the time of *Peladon*, A.P.Films/Century 21 closed. I heard that they were literally clearing everything out into the car park and selling it to anyone in the business who wanted it, so I suggested to Bernard that we take a BBC lorry down to Slough and fill it up with everything for library models, etc. Bernard, Mat Irvine and I went and we were literally just pulling stuff off the shelves and throwing them into boxes, and the lot cost us just £75! At the time the BBC were getting more and more into miniatures, and so the haul meant that they didn't need to pay someone every time we needed a set of, say, model oak trees - we now had a ready-made library!

A lot of the model vehicles we couldn't use because they were recognisably from various Anderson productions, but some ended up in my next DOCTOR WHO, *Frontier in Space (1973)*. However, the model work for that suffered badly and lacked any depth due to the bad lighting, so I persuaded Bernard to use Bray Studios as a miniatures facility and to hire cameramen from there who knew how to light and shoot models properly. I wasn't involved in the Dalek sequence at the end. Strangely enough I've never worked with them apart from on one that Peter Day asked me to do (*Genesis of the Daleks, 1975*). He came to me and said, 'They want to open the top - what can we put inside?', and I very quickly made a spongey thing covered in green slime.

Similarly, Bernard Wilkie was in charge of *Planet of the Spiders (1974)*, and one day he wandered around asking different people what they could come up with. I loosely based my design on the poster of the American Fifties film, *Tarantula*, where this great giant spider emerged out of this huge atomic explosion. I made my concept from the same material I used to make moss for the underwater scenes in THUNDERBIRDS and STINGRAY. I hung a strip up and sprayed it with solanised paint and I found that it dried very much like a sort of matted hairy leg, which was just what I wanted. But, again, it was simply too horrific for Barry. In the end Bernard accepted Mat's concept.

Bernard, Mat and I were alike in that we shared the feeling that it's what's on screen that matters, not the arguing, the experimentation, the overtime or even the money. There were some effects designers at the Beeb who were strictly engineers, and by that I mean they were mathematical thinkers, not creative thinkers. They would look at the script and give just the very basics that was required. Others of us liked to build on the idea and suggest something that was almost better than the writer first conceived.

Philip Hinchcliffe was my favourite producer. He and I got along so well and we thought along the same lines. We didn't want DOCTOR WHO to be a kiddiewinks' show, it was watched by the whole family. We both agreed that kids love being scared, and if they are hiding behind the sofa then they are not looking at it anyhow! Barry and I got on very well together but he was always pulling my reins back as a designer. If I could get some slime dripping somewhere or whatever, I would! Regarding directors, it's like finding the right dancing partner. You're going to have people who tread all over your toes, others that whisk you through and others that you have something in common with so you can build together and create as a team, which is what it's all about.

You were never working on consecutive DOCTOR WHOs for much the same reason that they used different writers; to keep the flow of different talents coming in all the time. There would be gaps when you'd be doing all sorts of other programmes and eventually you'd come back and you'd find there was a new producer. You would have a drink with him and he would get to know you. Every production meeting there would be a new cameraman, a new make-up lady, and, of course, a new cast, so you would take people as you found them and you didn't know whether you were going to get on with them or not, but even if you didn't you still had to pull together because it's 'The Show' that matters!

I actually bid for *Pyramids of Mars* (*1975*) because it was very much like a Hammer spoof. All the ideas in it were to give it the feel of a Mummy film. Paddy Russell, the director, was also very enthusiastic. There was a lovely breakable balsa wood chest I made for a fight sequence with all the pretty hieroglyphics on it, and when she saw it she said, 'No, I *can't* let that be smashed, it's too beautiful' (but I'd also made three more!).

The sequence where Scarman is shot by the poacher was in reverse. We perfected that effect back in the Seventies on DOCTOR WHO! It was fairly awkward for the actors and Paddy said, 'I'm so confused, take it away', so I directed that sequence and we did it in about two or three takes. For the smouldering feet, I cut holes in wooden steps and replaced these with blockboard backing on an alluminium Z, so as you tread on it the carpet - which was so fluffy so it wouldn't show the join - is cut. I put tiny little marks for the actor to tread and we rigged up some smoke underneath.

One of Bernard's discoveries was a lovely outside contractor who was very cheap to use. He made that sarcophagus based on Tutankhamun and painted it blue so that we could Chromakey into it. I designed and made the God-head mask. The mummys were designed by Barbara Kidd and were not based on the archetypal Hammer/Universal versions, in fact they were quite unique.

We shot it at Stargroves, which was Mick Jagger's home (he wasn't 'in' at the time). The odd coincidence, which nobody knew until it was over half way through shooting, was that it was originally the ancestral home of Lord Canarvan, the man who originally dug up the Valley of the Kings and supposedly had the curse of Tutankhamun.

The explosion at the end was a Les Bowie technique of blowing up a photograph of the house, exploding the model replica in the foreground, taking the top cut-out off, doing another bang and editing the two together. The shot of the TARDIS spinning through space, which I devised for that story, was re-used later because it looked better suspended on one wire and spinning than on two wires stationary. I thought it would look much better as a sort of a gyroscope rather than a stationary model in front of a space backdrop.

On *The Masque of Mandragora* (*1976*), I achieved the whirlpool effect for the Mandragora Helix with a perspex cone filled with transparent wallpaper paste slowly spun with the use of a propellor on an electric drill, mounted and water-tight sealed. This gives a controllable spin of anything dropped into the paste, in our case miniature polystyrene balls to represent the stars of the spinning galaxy. The perspex could be lit from underneath and photographed vertically from above so that, as we start to spin, the stars start moving - a convoluting convex if you like.

To prepare for Portmierion, as always one did the storyboard, a script breakdown, and then I started to design what we needed to take to the location. We used ignitor cord which gave off smoke and a fizz and it could be lit underwater to provide the sparks-over-the-water effect. The shooting star was an industrial sparkler - like six ordinary sparklers put together - which we did in the studio later and married it up to give the impression that it is coming across the sky, simply by panning the camera across and past the sparkler to give the feeling of movement.

For *The Invisible Enemy* (*1977*), K9 hadn't been established originally as a continuing character. It was purely due to positive feedback from the public generated by the pre-season publicity. Although the design came under Visual Effects, I played no part at all in his creation because, at that time, it was decided by Bernard Wilkie that the story needed two designers, so we had Tony Harding doing the floor effects and locations and I oversaw the miniatures and models. However, I had produced the original sketch for K9 which was a sort of ferocious doberman in armour, but Tony came up with a brilliant design which was very simple and cheap to produce.

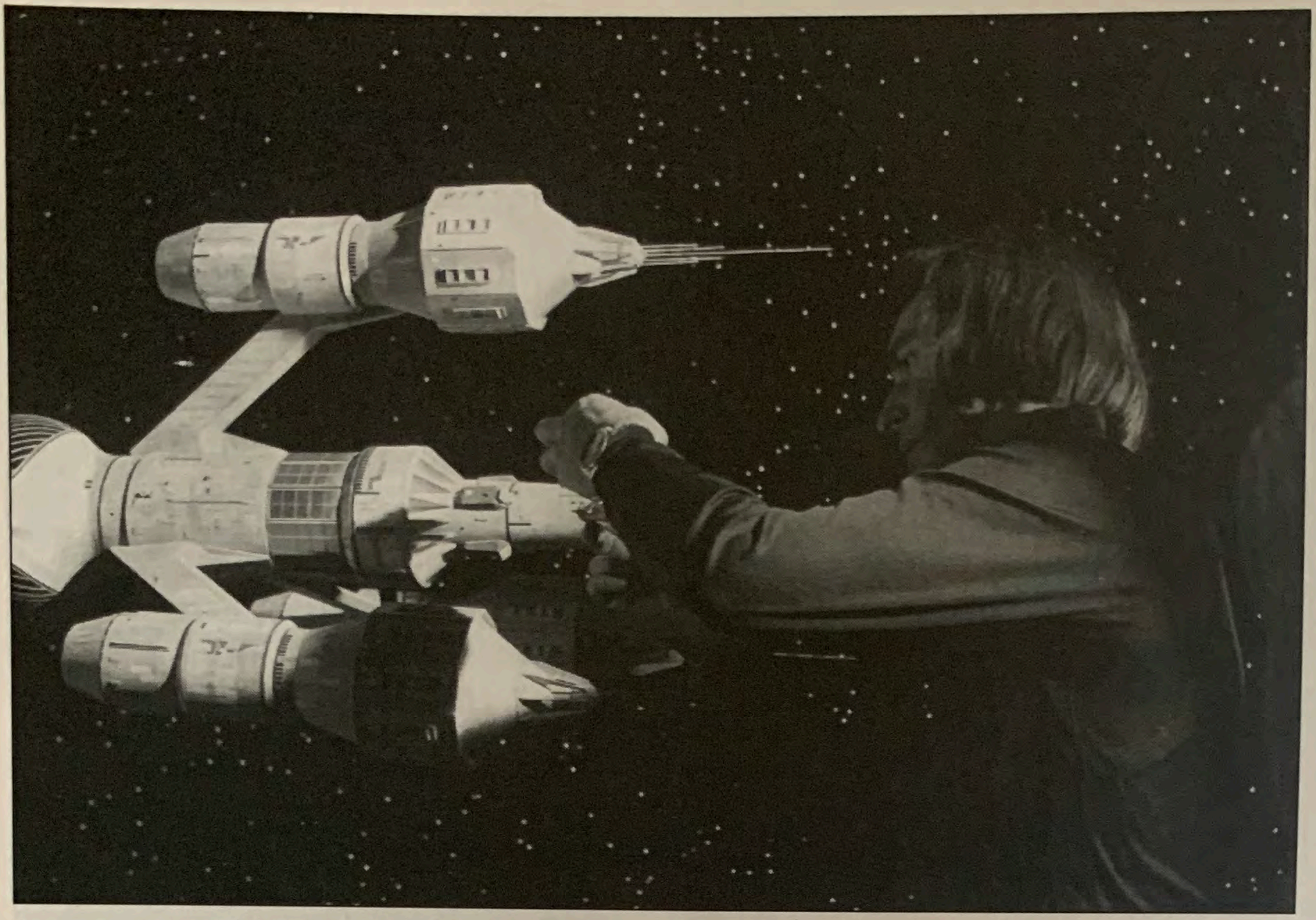
Earth as Sutekh would leave it (*The Pyramids of Mars*, 1975)

I always remember that K9 was eventually getting more fan mail than Tom Baker, and he used to get so jealous. Actors are very sensitive and temperamental creatures and he would kick the dog in rehearsals so it wouldn't work! K9 would get the shit kicked out of him by Tom during rehearsals in an effort to stop it working so that the director would hopefully say, 'I can't be bothered with the bloody dog, it never bloody works. Let's cut that scene out today', and Tom would sigh and think, 'Right, the camera's going to be on *me* instead'! We hired two guys from Aeromodels in Slough to look after the dog so that we didn't have to get involved at all. They would add extra solanoids and circuits so that K9 could do something different for each new story.

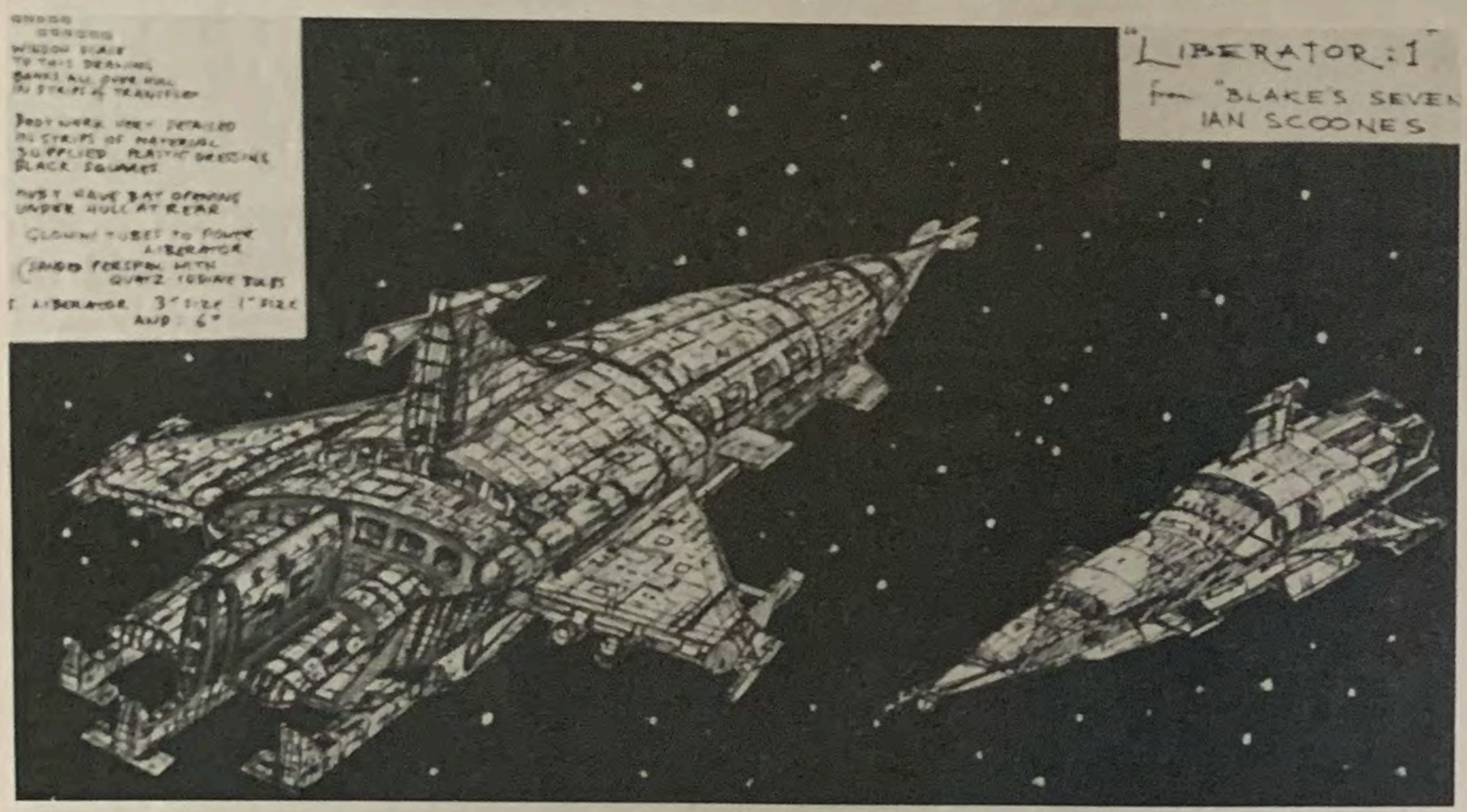
I was awarded very generous budgets on my last two stories. Dear Graham Williams, a large gin and tonic and he was anybody's! He'd say, 'Right, we'll lose that actor because he costs too much, and if you think you can do that model we'll get a lesser known actor in for this part...' That's why *The Invisible Enemy* didn't have any prominent guests cast - with my budget they couldn't afford them!

I had a bit of trouble with Julian Glover in *City of Death* (*1979*) because he didn't like wearing that mask. It was originally made for the little gills to flap with air, almost like a miniature hydra-head and the little gills could be inflated, but Julian didn't want all that going on. I designed the mask and John Friedlander made it. I just said, 'Let's have a can of worms!' I always think in terms of creatures, hence the Jagaroth spaceship which resembled a spider. To get a concept of what horrifies people you ask them what creatures they don't like. I think the reason the mask appeared bigger than it should have been was because the flap wasn't tucked in at the back for the front shots.

Ian on the prehistoric Earth set (*City of Death*, 1979)



Ian prepares The Liberator. (Below) His original design



DAVID MALONEY had been involved in directing DOCTOR WHO and he was made a producer. Z CARS - a rather crummy, typically bad BBC production which everybody loved for some unknown reason (they used to mount cars on rockers with all this back projection, it was that tatty!) - had come off and he was given a directive: 'The slot that will take over from Z CARS will be a police series in outer space'.

I was appointed VFX designer for all of the first season and we were all confident that this was going to be big. I went to see David with my ideas and he said, 'We haven't got any money for this, Ian'. I replied, 'But the audience is sophisticated now, they've watched *Star Wars* - they want gadgetry!' I warned him that unless we had more money then we'd have a total flop as bad as Z CARS. He stormed 'What do you mean as bad as Z CARS?! That was a wonderful series, they should never have taken it off!'

I explained that BLAKE'S 7 was basically a BBC version of STAR TREK and that it wasn't really a police adventure, and that we could do things better than they'd ever been done before at the BBC. I was arguing aesthetically for no reason other than I wanted BLAKE'S 7 to be a quality product, better than they thought would be possible.

In the meantime the series designer, Roger Murray Leach, grabbed the design of the Liberator and had already started designing it by the time I arrived, and it had been accepted. He then handed me his designs and said, 'There's the Liberator - you make it!', which was a bit of a cheek because we were not the Art Department's lackey. I had it made at Space Models in Feltham. Roger won through but I felt that the design of the Liberator was too architectural. We had three sizes of Liberator; a huge one, a half one and a smaller one, and they were made out of fibreglass. The thing about it was if you put it in a different setting you could almost be looking at *Sinbad's Last Crusade* because it's terribly Eastern, architecturally. You can tell a set designer has designed it rather than somebody into spaceships!

To add to the dreadful trio, up came Bob Blagden thinking that he was going to make his mark and took half of my shooting time away from Bray for all the opening graphics. He had got a whole lot of globes and worlds made which I had already duplicated anyway. A lot of it was done electronically in the end with composites.

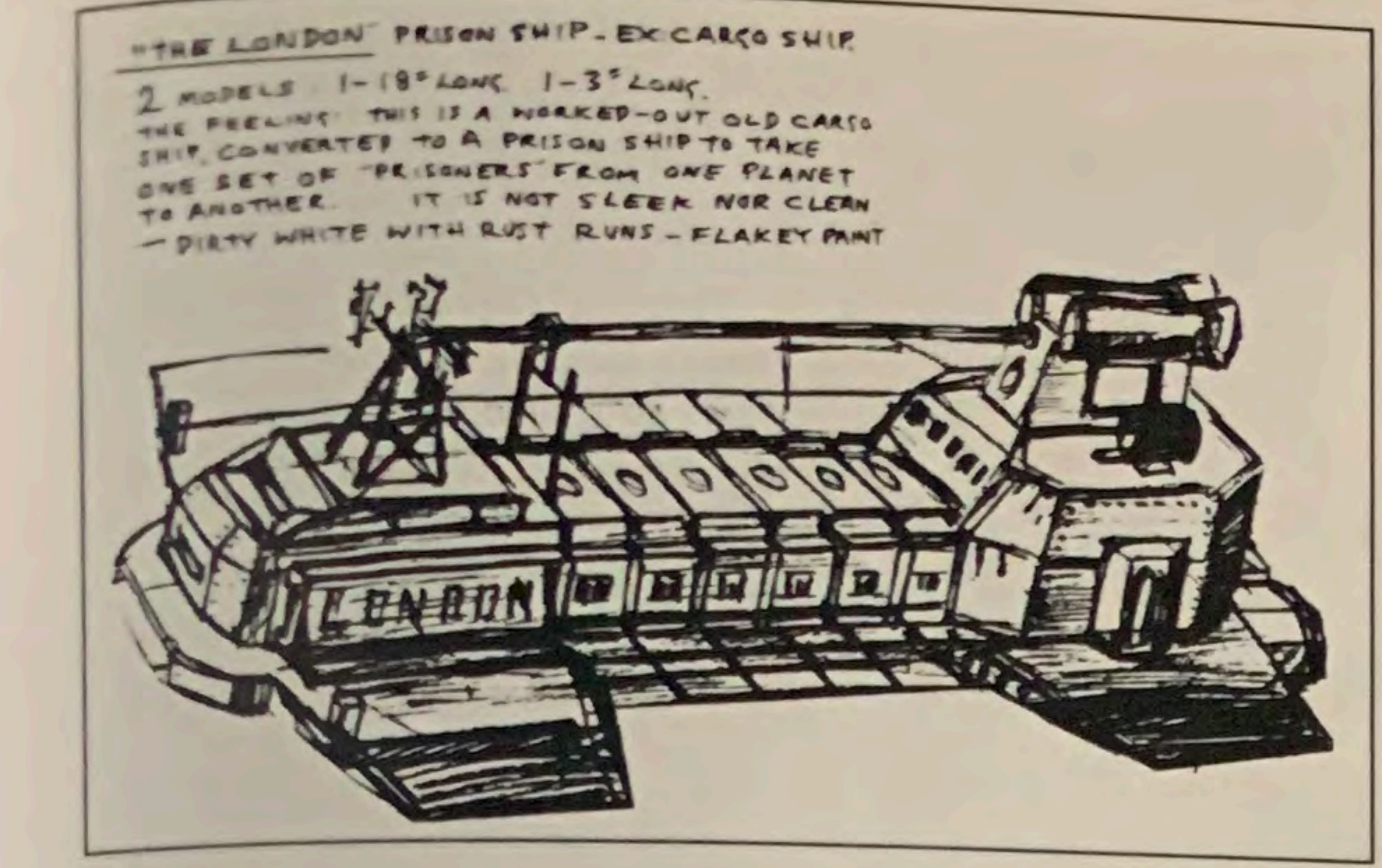
Apportioning my budget for the various effects in each episode, firstly I'd read the script, then I had to go to both David Maloney and the director and say, for example, 'Dome City; do you want a glass bubble of that ilk (very much like I did with the *City of Death* cratered landscape), do you want it slightly Egyptian or do you want a *Star Wars*-type dome?', and the latter is the one they went for. We got perspex specialists to make up the half sphere and we put millions of little holes in it to have light coming through. Tony Collins, who was a BBC scenic artist, came to Bray and painted us the backcloth, and it's his same sky you keep seei g in all the first episodes (apart from the space one) but lit differe -ly. We had Nick Allder to light it and he went on to win an Os r for his effects work on *Alien*. If ever we went down to Bray and e was around he was always willing to light our models. He also d stuff for DOCTOR WHO such as *The Invisible Enemy* and he insis d on a credit for that.

As much as we loved making all of these things, there just wa t enough time to do it all yourself if you were in charge of it . What you tended to do was make the model set while some e else is wiring it up or whatever. Dougie Camfield was especi y sympathetic. He used to tear whole pages up and say, 'I can't di t all this in the time, neither can you make all this stuff and neit r can the actors learn all these lines. Come on, we'll put in lots f chases to spread it out!', so he cut his episode (*Duel*) down. Mich l Briant was different because he wanted to direct all the vis l effects himself, but my cameramen were very unsympathetic him and they soon threw him into a panic and he quickly revert d to the usual set-up.

I used to compile my own special effects props list from the scripts in addition to my library stuff which was on a totally different list. This was stuff actually for the floor, and they all had to be made from scratch because this was a futuristic space series. David was up in arms that I had spent all the budget on the first episode, for which I designed seventeen props. For episode two it crept up to nineteen, episode three was twenty-seven and it kept creeping up, and by episode thirteen it was at a staggering thirty-nine! Everything was being used and reused on top of everything listed and it soon got ludicrous. David realised that what I had said from the beginning - that everything needed to look more 'spacified' and technically advanced - was true.

It was half my fault that I got lumbered with the entire season, but with the high level of competitiveness - which, don't get me wrong, was very healthy on the floor - I didn't want anyone else in on it, as simple as that, so I stayed the course. After I left two VFX designers - Jim Francis and Steve Drewett - were appointed.

If there was ever any rivalry between BLAKE'S 7 and DOCTOR WHO it was always in a fun way. We had plenty of people in the department and we were always bringing in extras so we weren't stretched, and when you couldn't do it inhouse you'd do it outside.


"THE LONDON" PRISON SHIP - EX CARGO SHIP
2 MODELS 1-18" LONG 1-3" LONG.
THE FEELING: THIS IS A WORKED-OUT OLD CARGO SHIP, CONVERTED TO A PRISON SHIP TO TAKE ONE SET OF "PRISONERS" FROM ONE PLANET TO ANOTHER. IT IS NOT SLEEK NOR CLEAN - DIRTY WHITE WITH RUST RUNS - FLAKEY PAINT
LONDON

Ian at work on The London and (left) his original design

However there weren't any people available to make the models on BLAKE'S 7 and so we brought in Space Models to do them. Mat Irvine was also on loan to me for a short time on certain things.

One of the biggest problems I found was where we had things suspended on wires. In the gallery if the engineers saw something that was a bit low-key they'd 'tweak' it up. The original negative of the film would be transferred to video, and if it wasn't 'tweaked' down you'd see a whole multitude of sins. I used to have to spend most of my time up in the box, not down on the floor when we were recording, to make sure that the bloody engineers weren't tweaking things up! The only one I ever met who understood was Mitch Mitchell, but these other technical blokes were going by the book and watching their graphs. They don't care if half a dozen wires are glistening and that if they were turned down they'd still glisten but look like stars!

The Federation Patrol Robot was Terry Nation having his eye on them taking off as 'the new Daleks'. I said 'Don't you want the designer in this shot?', and he said, 'No, no, this is a shot of *me*!' Everybody's out for their own egos in this business. In a roundabout way that reminds me of the reason why Gareth Thomas left after the second series. He went to do some stuff at the Royal Shakespeare Company, from where he came originally, and he said, 'They can't do another series until I've finished my season here, and anyway, they're going to have to pay me double!' Rather than postpone the season the BBC weren't going to wait for him, and they certainly weren't going to pay him double so they just wrote him out. He said, 'What do you mean? I *am* BLAKE'S 7 - you can't make it without *me*!'

I LEFT BLAKE'S 7 and was about to do some wonderful shows like THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS when the BBC started having cutbacks. I actually designed the Triffids but it was put back eighteen months until after I'd left the BBC in 1980 and Steve Drewett came in with his own ideas. It was one where I'd really gone into finite detail because I loved the story. I did a complete breakdown for everything that was going to be needed for the locations, for the shooting at Ealing, for the video at TV Centre, and it all got cancelled. I thought that the finished product was a good little show and it kept very much to the original story.

I was going through a lean time at the Beeb, which was very frustrating because work was not coming the way I wanted it to. I was perfectly secure but I didn't need to be secure (I didn't want a bloody pension, I'm not that type of guy). Around that time poor old Les Bowie died, on the very night that it was announced that he was among six SFX supervisors involved on *Superman* who'd been nominated for an Oscar, and sadly he never knew about it. Of all the people in the VFX business, Les Bowie is my mentor.

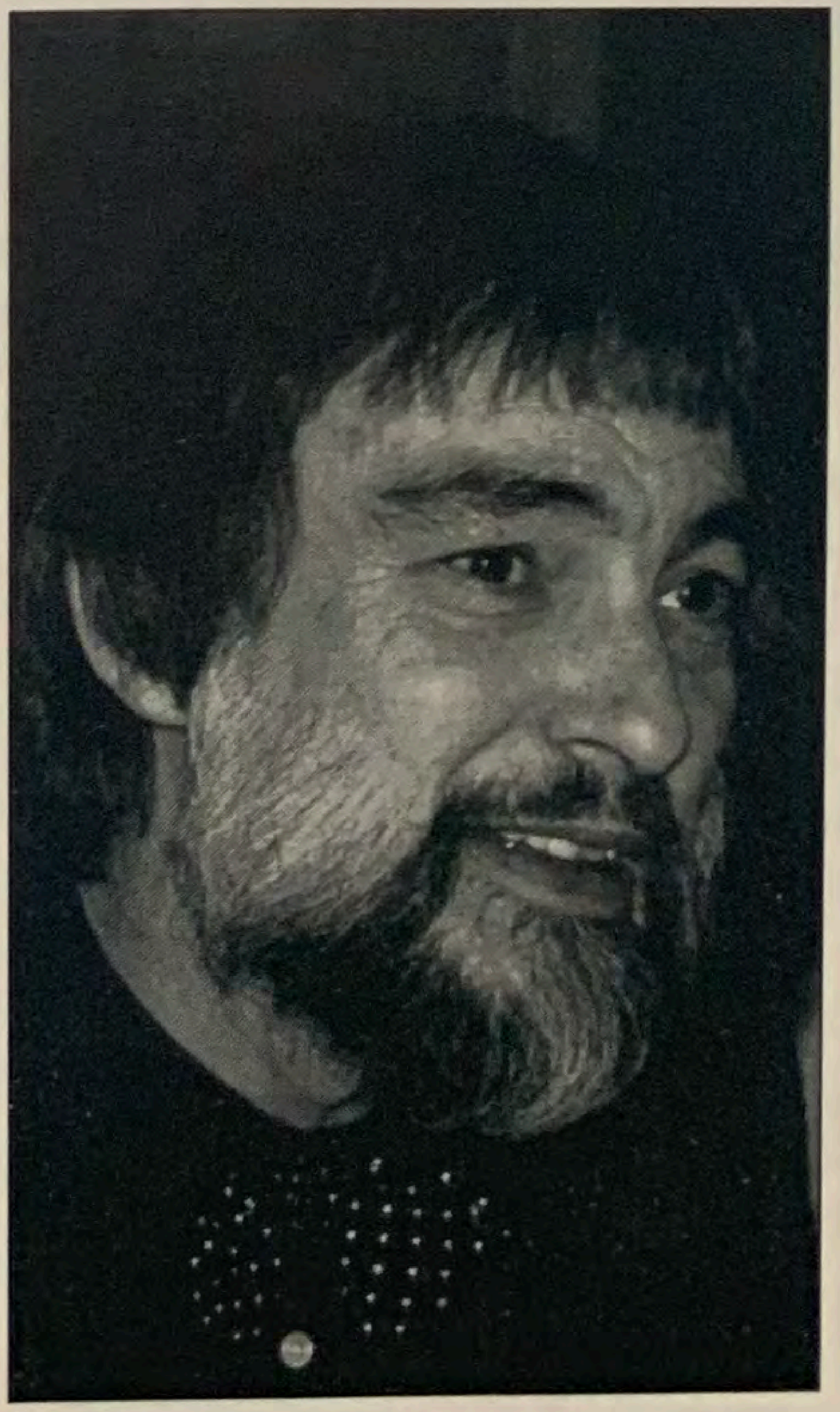
Out of the blue Hammer decided to make a television series of thirteen films and I suddenly got a phone call from Ron Skeggs, the new owner. He said, 'Poor old Les is dead, I'm interested in employing you for HAMMER HOUSE OF HORROR. So I left the BBC and was the visual effects supervisor for the whole series.

They didn't do any in the more traditional gothic style due to money (again) - you'd have to start building sets specially. Science fiction and fantasy spells money out of the run of the mill. All the time they can get away with showing actors-only programmes like soap operas which get the ratings and where advertisers can make their money because they know they've got a guaranteed audience - they don't want to get into complicated, ethereal things which cost more and people don't watch in comparison, at least not in their mass millions.

In recent years I've been involved with INSIDE TIME - a sort of poor man's DOCTOR WHO - for Thames, just doing a few bangs here and there. I also did the Barclaycard ad featuring Rowan Atkinson with the exploding pen.

The effects man worth his salt will never say 'No' because there's many ways of doing the same effect. The same as a magician knows how to do a card trick, each magician will do it slightly differently. There are ways and there are ways. The trouble is, you always get remembered for the bad things (for the thing that didn't quite go right first time it was supposed to), not the positive, wonderful things." ❑

● **Interviewed by Jeremy Bentham, Paula Bentham and Gary Leigh**



● **Postscript:** *In 1991 Ian helped design the successful DOCTOR WHO exhibition at MOMI in London, and assisted in subsequent exhibitions in the Isle of Wight and Bristol. A proposed Hammer exhibition never reached fruition. In 1992 he was the special effects supervisor on several corporate videos, the Norwich Union television commercial and the Central TV series PEAK PRACTICE, while in 1993 he returned to feature films with UFO, as well as dabbling in a pop/opera video. 1994 sees the launch of a limited edition run of five prints of his own paintings based on several of the DOCTOR WHO adventures he has been involved with.*

1974 the doctors 1981

Tom Baker

"I'm not qualified to talk about television. I mean, I don't even watch it" - **October 1985**

HOW DID YOU FEEL when you were offered the role of the fourth Doctor?

Oh, Christ! Just great relief that I had a job. At the time I was out of work and earning money on a building site in Pimlico.

But you'd done some big films up to then.

So? It doesn't make any difference. There are plenty of people out of work who have done big films and who are broke. I had to do some work, that's all.

Did you think consciously about how you were going to play the part?

No, I don't think consciously about anything I'm going to play - I don't know how I'm going to play anything until the scripts come in.

Didn't you sit down with your producer and script editor to devise your character?

No, they had no idea either. I'd signed a contract before they asked me what I was going to do with it, so by then it was too late because I was under contract!

What did you think of the character and costume when it came out?

Well, I didn't watch it so I don't know. I used to be aware of the reaction to it but it was all a series of 'accidents'. A lot of times afterwards, like now, people think that there was a great deal of thought that went into it. I don't mean that it was entirely thoughtless, but there wasn't a great deal of calculation. They just thought I would be right for the part. I mean, they'd seen me in some special effects picture, and I got the part and I did it.

Doctor Who isn't an acting part any more than Sherlock Holmes is an acting part or James Bond is an acting part; they're just cyphers, aren't they? They're just utterly predictable. There's no change in the characters of Sherlock Holmes, Doctor Who or James Bond or lots of other heroes.

In television, surely, the paradox of so-called 'acting' is once a programme reaches a particular stage in its popularity people don't change. In other words, to a large extent in series on television it's the death-knell of acting because the audience don't want any change. There's no difference between the characters on Z CARS on the first day it happened really than on the last day, or DYNASTY or DALLAS. Those people aren't acting, they just are; they're caught in this vacuum - this time-capsule - where they never change, where the women never get older (they just get bitchier!).

Don't you think it changed un the influences of different prod ers? Philip Hinchcliffe Graham Williams, for exampl

I don't know why everyo found me funny. I found funny because I find *everyth* funny. Things that I don't fi funny just make me bad-te pered. When you're talki about television you're ve rarely talking about actin You must get that into yo head (and anyone else's he as well). Go on, next que tion...

Graham Williams has said th you used to get very upset wi the characters of the compani and that you wanted to chang them?

I did, yes. I used to get really pissed off with the characters of the companions. I thought they were all boring, except for Elisabeth. I liked Sarah and I liked very much Ian Marter because I admired him because he was marvellous to be with and very clever. But yes, I did get fed up with the girls. I thought that it used to get rather predictable. I wanted to change it to anything to relieve the boredom. I wanted an arthritic old lady or a naked child with snaggled teeth and spiky hair. I loathe things that are 'cosy'. I loathe the predictability of practically everything - that the only sort of nice people are pleasant-looking and well-spoken people. That bores me to death. I'm actually interested in oddness and more ordinary things. I don't like much of what I see on television. Well, in fact I'm not qualified to talk about television, I mean, I don't even watch it.

And you never watched DOCTOR WHO, even when you were in it?

Never, except bits of it when I saw the editing. I just remember

THE TIMES
Cabinet will not rush through labour legislation

(Above) Tom Baker, unemployed actor in 1971, makes the news (right) when he is cast in *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad* (1974)

making it. It was a job and it was a jolly job and I enjoyed doing it.

Did you enjoy your trip to Paris?

It was rather jolly actually. It was very easy to film there because no-one had ever heard of DOCTOR WHO so they just thought I was some kind of elderly, eternal student.

I don't want to disappoint the fans of the thing but it was a very long time ago and it's very important that people understand that at the beginning it was just another job. If you're out of work, any job will do, and to me it seemed heaven to have a whole year of regular work because I was on a building site. I had no idea what was going to happen in it, I mean, occasionally I'd see DOCTOR WHO if I was looking after some kids or something like that, but I had no idea about that.

You've said that some of the scripts were very samey and dull. How do you think they could have been improved?

I don't know how they could have been improved. The thing is, of course, they got repetitive for me because I did so many. I mean, I realise the difficulty of the writers; it is difficult to write for television because television is a kind of incinerator - it just devours material at a colossal rate. Given a number of situations I'd done them all, and they started coming on again! I mean, I wasn't a writer, I wasn't a script editor. I got on mostly quite well with the editor actually, especially Doug Adams.

And the directors?

I got on well with all of those fellows because I knew them so well and they knew me so well. I knew their work backwards and they knew my work backwards, and it was important in that kind of television to be able to work very fast. Sometimes I was working on four scripts at a time and things weren't necessarily shot in sequence, so one had to be very fast.

Do you recall any particularly strong casts?

No, I thought the standard of the invited actors was excellent most of the time, as far as I can remember, and they seemed very happy to be in it.

Do you enjoy conventions and meeting the fans?

Well, I did enjoy meeting the fans, but sometimes the fans would get me confused with the character and this is a very grave error. I mean, it's great and I'm very touched that people are so loyal, but I am not that character, you know. Doctor Who was just a character I played - it wasn't me. If I wanted to I could go and live in America on DOCTOR WHO where DOCTOR WHO is still being marketed - its science fantasy and science fiction conventions are huge businesses - but I can't be doing that.

Do you enjoy the big conventions?

Well sometimes. Yes, I enjoy the odd one but they get very repetitive. If someone invites me to go by Concorde to New York and I've got nothing to do on a Friday, I'll fly to New York and see a couple of thousand people and try and amuse them for an hour, but, I mean, that's all I can do.

I enjoyed doing the publicity promoting the programme because I take publicity very seriously to promote anything that I happen to be in. But I also enjoy the anonymity, I mean, since it's over and since my hair's been cut off in the last year or so I'm not recognised in the streets, so it's been a great relief to me. Obviously people are interested in people's pasts, that's all they've got to go on - the future is guess work and the present is usually exaggerated - but my past is well in the past. What, it's the fifth year I've been away from it, I think? The details of it recede in my mind. I mean, I didn't watch it when I was in it and I certainly didn't watch it after I left - I wasn't involved - and have very rarely been back at the BBC since.

You were back at the BBC as Sherlock Holmes in THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES, *a part you are currently touring with in* THE MASK OF MORIARTY. *Is this a role you have always wanted to play?*

No. I didn't see myself as Sherlock Holmes, but it was the same production team that had picked me for DOCTOR WHO and thought that I'd be a very good Sherlock Holmes. As you probably know I don't think it turned out to be a very successful production.

POLICE BOX

A press call on 15th February 1974 introduces Tom Baker as the fourth Doctor Who.

It wasn't very well received, nor did I particularly enjoy playing Sherlock Holmes in that. This is different, a modern play, and also I'm a great admirer of Hugh Leonard.

There is talk of a film of this production. Would you like to be involved in that?

I'm so sceptical about films because most of them are so terrible, aren't they, and one does films for money I suppose. I mean, you don't do them for any other reason, I can't imagine. Or publicity, that's the same as money, a kind of investment. After a while you get to understand what the possibilities are in films. If they made a film of this play, which I think they could do beautifully, I swear to God - and I hope you'll write this down (I don't trust you fellows because you can edit this totally the way you like and inevitably I'm disappointed because people edit badly) - the possibility of Tom Baker playing Sherlock Holmes must be absolutely zero, *absolutely zero*. When a good script or a good book comes up and a film production buy it, they don't take any chances at all, they back hot favourites. I don't know if you know anything about Michael Collins, but I happen to know something about him because I read Irish history. If they ever made a film about Michael Collins in the next few years do you know who's going to play him? Robert Redford! So don't talk to me about films and what I might do in films; my chances in films are *zero*, except playing small parts.

The rules of logic don't apply to film stars, I mean, the thought of Robert Redford playing Michael Collins just makes me giggle. It's just absurd - you can't have a film star credibly playing an historical character like Collins. But that's the predictability of films. Popular films are utterly, utterly predictable, and most of them utterly boring to me. I prefer books to films myself.

During your time on Doctor Who there were rumours of a Doctor Who film.

That's right. I was taken out to lunch last week by the production office with some American fans who were in London and someone asked me again would I like to do a Doctor Who film, and I just simply laughed in their faces. I'd refuse, I mean, why should I play it? Why shouldn't they get someone else to play it? Why doesn't the current man play it? I don't know...

The Doctor and assorted foes wait patiently outside the American embassy in London on 14th February 1978 as BBC Enterprises prepare to mount a sales bid at NAPTE - America's biggest TV programme market. US Marine Sgt. Frank Zigler stands guard

Is your cynicism about films...

Not my cynicism at all. You mustn't misunderstand me about cynicism. Cynicism, actually, is the absence of sensible feeling. Oscar Wilde defined cynicism as a cynic being a man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing. That is a very, very good working definition of a cynic. I think I do know the value of certain things, but you can't expect me to be anything except rather sceptical about what poses for popular movies, no more than I'm sceptical about what poses for popular television or most popular music. Most of what's popular is pap, and if you get into it you do it for the money and the fun.

Does your opinion of films grow out of your time in films in the early Seventies?

No, it grows out of actually seeing them. I'm very keen on films, not many of the popular films but I do go and see films and I sometimes see serious films that I love and admire and would dearly like to be in. Not many.

Do you prefer stage work then?

No, I don't prefer one to the other at all, I just prefer whatever I'm doing at the moment. If I was doing a film at the moment, no matter how

In costume for the first time: Tom Baker with Ian Marter, Elizabeth Sladen and Bessie, outside BBCtv Centre.

A press drive on 6th March 1975 to launch *Genesis of the Daleks* (1975)

You keep jumping from one thing to the other and frequently abandoning a total success to try the unknown.

You've played characters as diverse as Oscar Wilde and Rasputin. Did you do much research into their real characters?

The thing is it doesn't matter how much research you do into a character. Finally you can only play the character that's in the script, but yes, one does one's duty and you read a few books. I've read everything by Oscar Wilde and twenty or thirty books about him so I was very familiar with his work anyway.

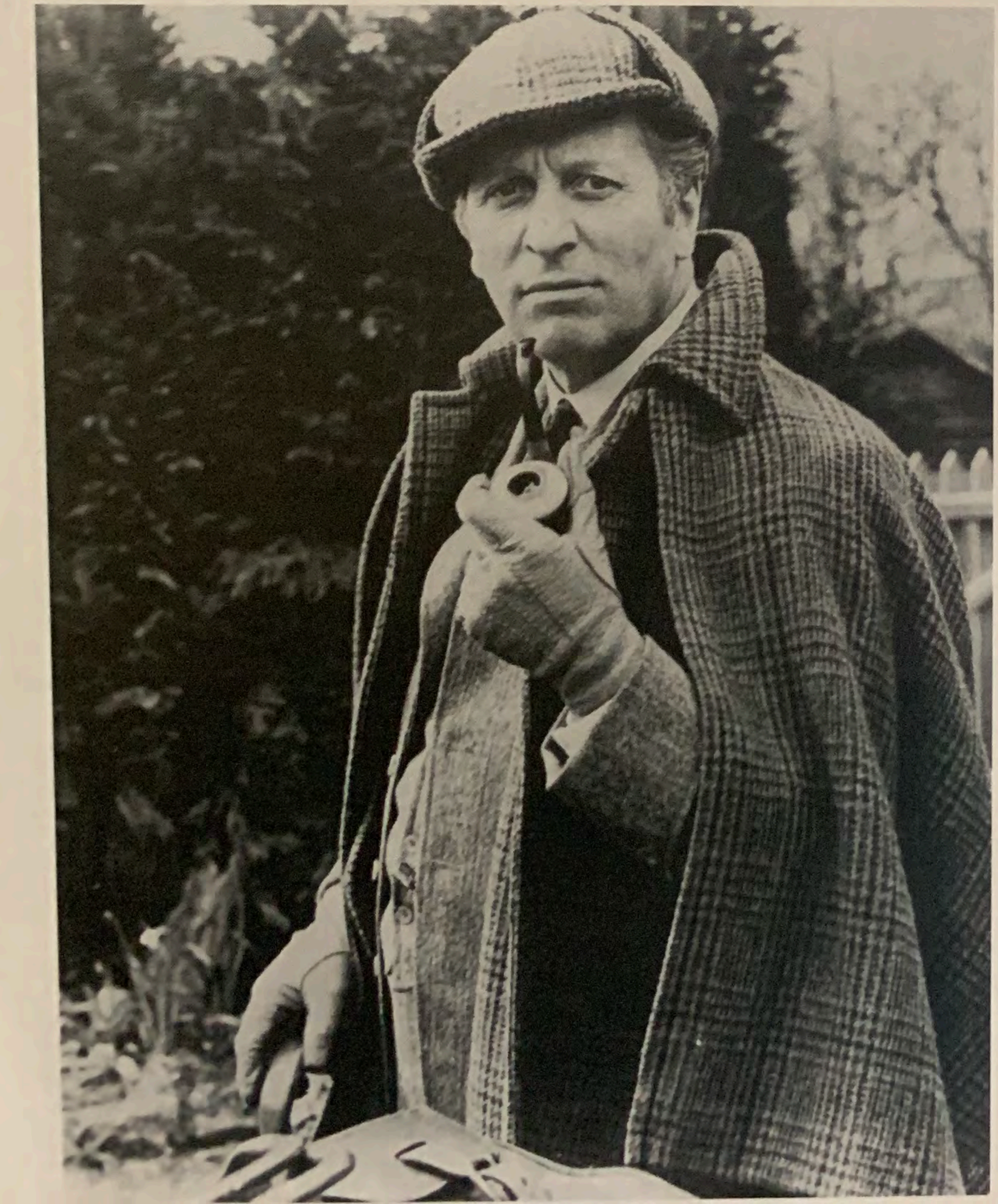
Do you enjoy playing real-life characters?

Yes, I enjoy them because anything I take on I try to enjoy, even sometimes if I make mistakes. There's no point in not trying to enjoy something because it's not like deciding to go to the cinema in the afternoon or going to Phoenix Park. I actually move my will and say I'm going to enjoy it and any kind of disappointment that comes my way I'll just brush aside. Otherwise I would be shattered!

sloppy it was, and I'd committed myself to it, I'd be very preoccupied with the film. Actors are not like dentists or accountants or people who work for the Bank of Ireland. I'm not going to stay playing Sherlock Holmes; Sherlock Holmes is the most important part of my life at the moment until the end of November and then I shall just elbow Sherlock Holmes and start the next thing and then the next thing becomes the most important part of my life. That's the difference between actors and dentists and other people.

Have you any plans for the future?

Absolutely no plans at all. Actors will tell you they've got plans and most of them are telling lies. How can actors plan - about five actors in the world can plan! They're just waiting for something to come in and are telling lies to the press to satisfy or kid themselves. I turned down a couple of commercial jobs on Wednesday in advance that I didn't want to do, but they were quite trivial and nothing of any importance at all. No, all I plan is to stay well and happy and fit and try and do good work and please the public."



Tom Baker as Sherlock Holmes in the BBC's adaption of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1982)

● Interviewed by Daragh Carville, Colm Hackett and Alan Millar

● Postscript: *Tom Baker has continued to enjoy a lucrative career a voice-over artist for a multitude of television commercials and corpor videos. In the flesh he is seldom off the small-screen, in a variety of gui as a narrator of stories for Channel 4's BOOM (1989); a part in Doug Adams' HYPERLAND on the BBC (1990); Puddlegum the Marshwig in The Silver Chair segment of the BBC's THE CHRONICLES OF NAR (1991); and more recently as eccentric Professor Geoffrey Hoyt i Granada's high-profile drama series MEDICS, now into its third serie (and Professor Plum in ITV's CLUEDO!).*

After a decade as a recluse away from the world of DOCTOR WHO, 1989 saw the release of his chapter into the Myth Makers series, which was followed-up a year later by a more indepth foray into his enigmatic mind with Reeltime's Just Who on Earth is Tom Baker? Since then he has presented The Tom Baker Years and Shada for BBC Video, and The Evil of the Daleks, The Power of the Daleks and Fury from the Deep for BBC Radio Collection's series of audio tapes.

He was set to return to the role of the Doctor proper, alongside Jon Pertwee, Peter Davison, Colin Baker and Sylvester McCoy, in a 96-minute special entitled The Dark Dimension by fan turned author Adrian Rigelsford, to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the series in November 1993. Petty behind the scenes politics and resentful snipings over his role - which was designated the lion's share of the action - intervened to scupper what promised to be a feature film of epic proportions. Fans were instead greeted with a fleeting appearance on the CHILDREN IN NEED pantomime skit Dimensions in Time.

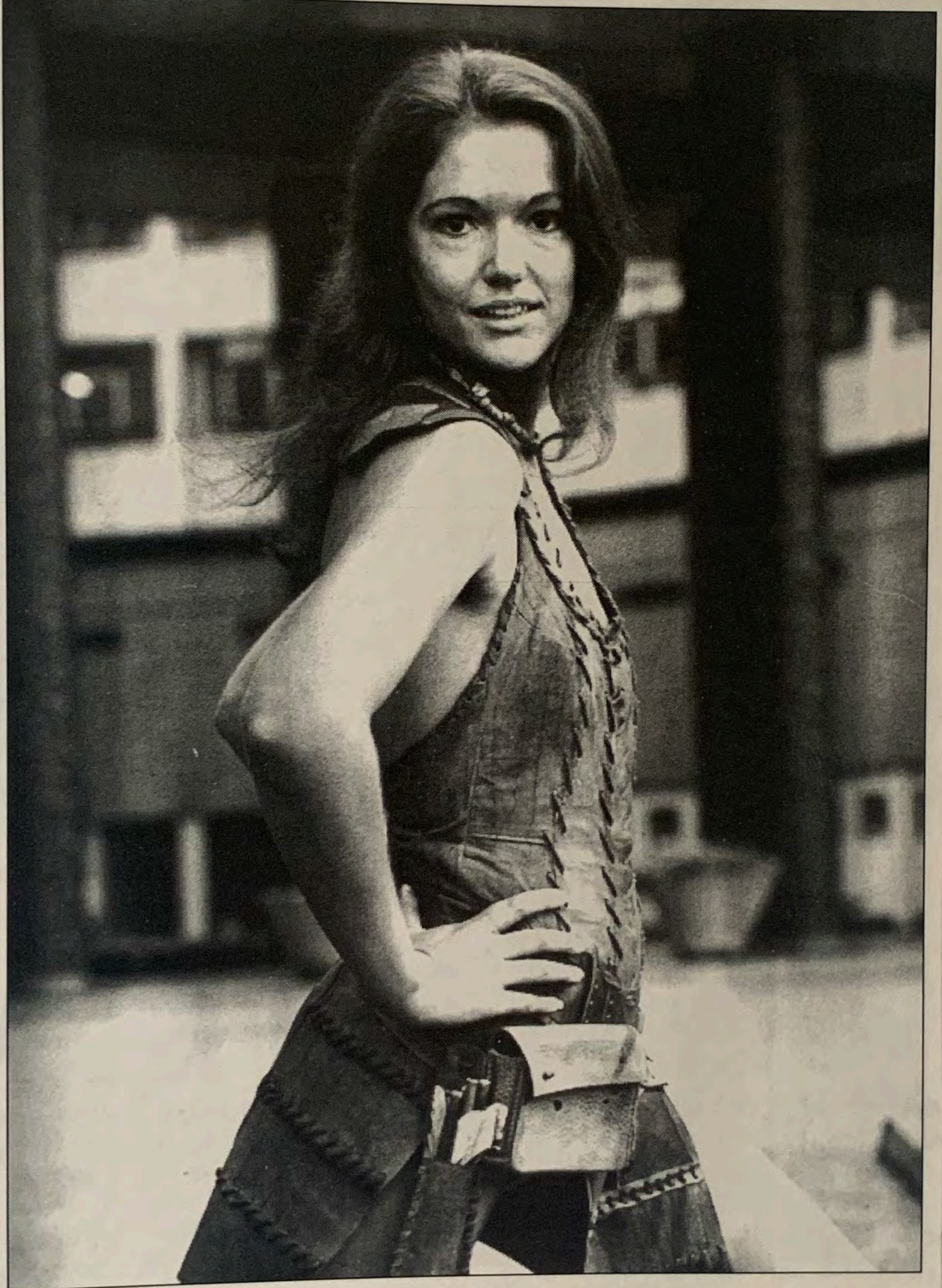
1977 **the companions** 1978

Louise Jameson

"It would have been impossible to emulate what Lis had done" - 1985

“WHEN I was four years old I played Little Miss Muffet at nursery school and I just loved the audience reaction, and I thought this is obviously where I'm going to spend the rest of my life.

DOCTOR WHO started when I was twelve (I was a great Daleks watcher!). I got the part of Leela when the then producer, Philip Hinchcliffe, interviewed sixty girls for it, then that got whittled down to ten, then five, three, and finally me. But it was actually the director, Pennant Roberts, who gave it to me because, he said, I made him work. They asked Tom Baker to be at the interview, but he declined and said he'd rather let the director and producer decide. Pennant said that when I read the lines he felt he absolutely had to respond, which is why he decided to give it to me. The audition was based on one of my first scenes as Leela, which was basically running away from the Doctor and saying 'My name's Leela'.



They decided, very wisely, I think, to go for an entirely different character to Lis Sladen's. I think it would have been impossible to emulate what Lis had done - she did it so well that it would have been impossible to try to recreate that. I think they were dead right in trying to go for someone with a lot more aggression, a lot more independence, and a completely different costume!

I saw Leela as a mixture of naivete, innocence and untrained energy. I based her on the little girl that lived upstairs, who was then three, and my then dog called Bosie who was pure instinct and uneducated intelligence. I think the great danger was to portray her as stupid. Just because someone is uneducated doesn't mean they're stupid, so I tried very hard to play her as intelligent.

My producers were both very good for very different reasons. Philip (*Hinchcliffe*)'s very cool. He's that kind of man who never puts his arms in his jacket - it's always slung around his shoulders. He's slightly distant but very efficient, and a very intelligent man. Graham (*Williams*) worked far more from the ground floor himself. He was always very much more accessible, though maybe he didn't carry the same amount of weight with people that were above him. So they were both very good in their own different ways.

As for the stories I had to work with, I particularly liked *The Sun Makers* (1977) because it had political content, and I think to be able to get some kind of message across in a very entertaining format is part and parcel of what we should be responsible for. The one I hated was the one set in a lighthouse (*Horror of Fang Rock*) because that was actually written for Lis Sladen, so I had a lot of trouble correlating the script with the character I'd already set up.

The Talons of Weng-Chiang is my second favourite, again by Robert Holmes who I think is by far the best writer. When I got the script, it said 'Leela jumps onto the table, somersaults over the chair, crashes through the window and falls ten feet on the earth beneath'. I actually phoned the producer and I said 'No she doesn't!' I was forever scratching out the parenthesis directions - 'Leela screams', 'Leela gets scared', 'Leela trips over and sprains her ankle' - so I would insist Leela does not do these things, Leela would draw a knife instead!

I think Tom Baker's one of the most extraordinary actors I've ever worked with, really extraordinary, though dedicated to the series. He also does a tremendous amount of charity work, which he never uses for his own personal publicity. But having said all that he can be temperamental and really rather bolshy and make life rather difficult if he wants to for people around him. He's a very odd mixture.

I remember one time when Tom and I were being filmed walking down a corridor, and suddenly he stopped and said 'Leela?', and I thought 'What's he going to do now?', and he said 'Would you get off my scarf please?' I'd been standing on his six foot trail of scarf! There was another time when we'd been filming on the roof of a cigarette factory in Bristol for *The Sun Makers*, and I was so cold when I came off the set and my fingers were completely white because I only had that leather leotard on. I was asked to sign autographs, and I'm sure it seemed as though I was being bolshy but I actually could not move my fingers!

I actually stole one of my leotards, and when I left they gave me a really rather beautiful knife with 'Leela' inscribed on it with the dates that I worked on the programme as a farewell present. Mind you, I think I was written out appallingly! The BBC's way of getting rid of a woman, to make her fall in love, is just so unimaginative, boring and totally sexist! Graham Williams wanted me to stay for Season Sixteen, and right up until the day we went into the studio he was pleading 'I can rewrite the ending, all you've got to do is just change your mind and we'll have you rushing into the TARDIS...', so that's why I think it was badly written. I could have died saving the Doctor's life or something - there's a million ways it could have been done better.

A 20th anniversary get together: Peter Davison, Louise Jameson, Sarah Sutton, Carole Ann Ford, Janet Fielding, Caroline John and Elizabeth Sladen (24th March 1983)

I left because I'd done two years of DOCTOR WHO and there are only so many ways you can say 'What is it, Doctor?', and you run out of interpretations. The script can be very frustrating. Also I just love theatre and I'd been offered a part in *The Merchant of Venice*.

People asked me, after I'd left DOCTOR WHO, if I was afraid of becoming typecast, but there aren't that many savages from other planets so I can't say I really was! Those parts don't come by too often. I think my character in BERGERAC, Susan Young, has the most danger of being typecast. In a way it's the most 'normal' type of person that I've played.

After DOCTOR WHO I went straight to The Old Vic to do *Portia*, and then I did a BBC series called THE OMEGA FACTOR. I wasn't asked to appear in *The Five Doctors* (1983), and I'm not quite sure of the reasons behind it. John Nathan-Turner did ask me to come back for a series to do the overlap from Tom Baker to Peter Davison and I said that I'd go back for a story or two but not for a season, so I don't know if he was a bit miffed by that. I'd love to do a special, though, but just the one - I wouldn't go back for a season.

The bubble seems to have gone out of the market as far as I'm concerned. It's finding time that's the trouble, but yes, I do do conventions, especially if there's a good wage packet, because the money will go to HOPE, which is a charitable organisation run by my husband and myself (all donations gratefully accepted, cheques payable to HOPE, Nat West, Camden High Street, London NW1 0NS). All the money feeds one particular orphanage in Northern Romania which houses 111 children.

If I could be granted one wish it would be to do a film of a book called *The Bone People*, which is about child abuse and trying to und- stand the proble As I said earlie I feel it's very imp tant to do soci aware work. It wo also be quite nic get to grips w some good dram theatre." ❑

● **Interviewed b Simon O'Conno**

● **Postscript:** *Si 1989 I have been b to the Ro Shakespeare Compa for a season at t Barbican. I've done two series for the BBC called* R*IDES* *(about female ca drivers) and also toured twice playing Elvira in Blithe Spirit. Last yea was particularly successful with a Disney film in the summer called Stick With Me Kid, followed by a TV series for the Children's Channel called* M*OLLY* *(playing Peter Davison's wife!!). They had to cast my character in a big hurry and thanks to the* D*OCTOR* W*HO* *conventions where Peter and I had met I got the part!! Also, still to be aired is a Radio 4 play called A Vital Flaw, and a drama from the Without Walls series which I finished last week. And next week I start rehearsals for a play called Elsewhere at the King's Head, Islington. -* ***Louise Jameson, January 1994***

1977 **the producers** 1979

Graham Williams

"I came in for a fair amount of stick" - April 1985

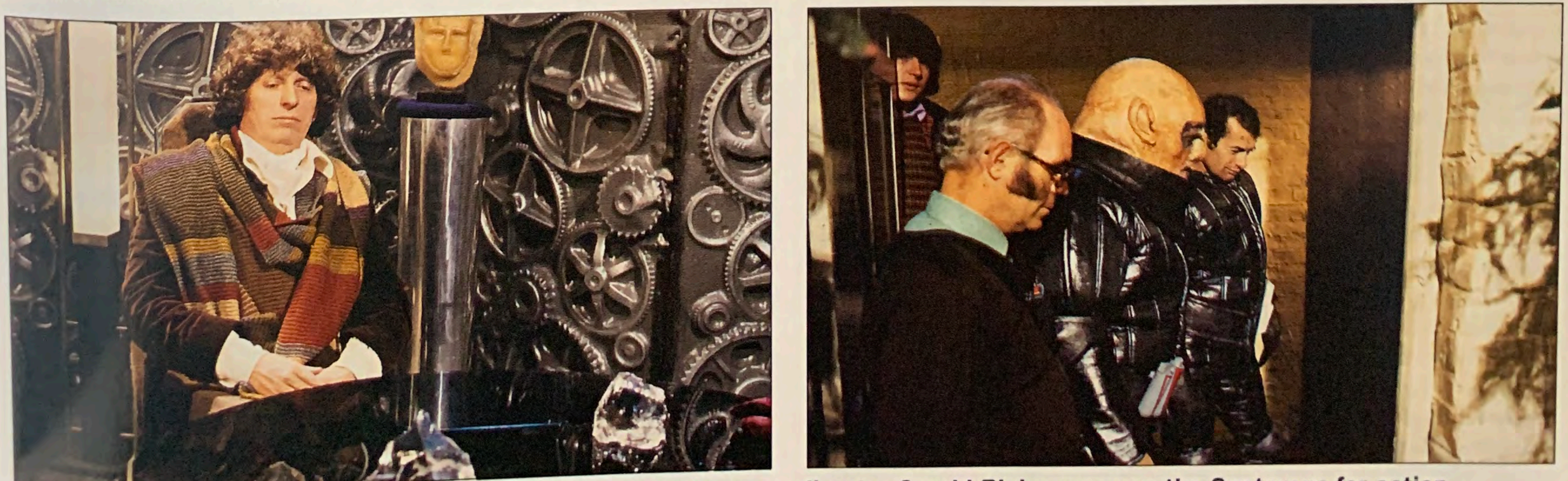
Tom Baker, Mary Tamm, and a hollow TARDIS!

"I JOINED the BBC as a trainee assistant floor manager in December '66. Up to then I'd been in theatre stage-management, and the idea really was that I should earn enough money with the dear old Beeb in order to finance going back into the theatre, which I liked very much. It still makes me smile a little when you hear eminent actors, like Olivier, saying 'We started off with £5 a week' in such and such a rep. That was usually about 1920 - I was still getting £5 a week in 1962!

BBC2 and colour had just happened, so there was a tremendous amount of exciting stuff being done in TV, and within about twelve months I was a fully-fledged AFM. I stayed, moved down to London and became a script editor in the Serials Department, starting off on things like SUTHERLAND'S LAW, then series like BARLOW and Z CARS, among others.

I was working on Z CARS when Bill Slater - who I'd worked with extensively in the Series Department - became Head of Drama Serials, and I started developing, at his request, some ideas for a television film series that he wanted to put in the following year. There'd been a massive co-production offer from America in 1975 which was worth $1.5 million - which is a heck of a lot of money - and for that they wanted twelve 90-minute television films. I got the scripts ready and was set to produce THE ZODIAC FACTOR, as it was called, a thriller series. But the BBC couldn't afford to match the $1.5 million so they wrote off twenty thousand quids' worth of scripts all of which, to my knowledge, have now turned up as serials and published as books (a very successful series that just never got made!). I was traumatised - I put nine months of my life into that!

When THE ZODIAC FACTOR fell through, and pretty well the day the row broke about *The Deadly Assassin*, Bill Slater said 'Look, we can't keep you hanging around for the rest of your life doing nothing. Philip (*Hinchcliffe*)'s moving on, would you like to take over DOCTOR WHO?' The outcry over *The Deadly Assassin* was a culmination, over a long time,



***The Invasion of Time*, 1978. (Right) Graham Williams looks on as director Gerald Blake prepares the Sontarans for action**

of complaints about the programme getting more and more violent and more and more sadistic. It was part and parcel of my taking over the show that amongst the other things I would do, I would ensure that the violence didn't reach those sort of protest levels, which I didn't mind particularly as I thought the violence had gone too far. It didn't offend me greatly, but I didn't think that the show would suffer by taking the violence down a notch or two.

That was my main brief but it wasn't a priority by any means. My priority, if there was one from Bill Slater, was to take the programme even further away from 'kiddy kiddy land'. All my stuff up to then had been at least post eight o'clock, and some things we were doing in Z CARS was the *real* world of violence and sadism - baby battering, wife battering, rape - so certainly I didn't mind that change. It's awfully difficult to talk about anything like violence or sex in a programme because it's entirely a matter of personal taste and judgement. I think I would like not to have had quite so severe a brief on the violence because I know kids like to be frightened.

We tried to keep all of the frightening stuff to a fantastical violence that kids would not easily imitate. I'd had lots of cautions from my Z CARS days and having to take out of scripts what authors lovingly put in, like how to hot-wire a car or how to cut somebody up in a fight with a broken bottle. There was one chap who gave stage by stage lessons! I inherited Leela and I never considered, for a moment, her with a knife to be violent any more than Cathy Gale was in THE AVENGERS. It's exactly the same sort of character and so we didn't change her at all. I think the only thing we changed about Leela was the colour of her eyes, and that was only to get them back to what they were before the tinted contact lenses!

The caveats were in the violence area and taking it away from the kiddies, otherwise absolute freedom that I don't think you enjoy in any other programme, which is terrific in a sense but then you don't get the feedback from 'up top' (e.g. 'Am I going roughly down the road you want me to go down?'), and you didn't know that you were going wrong until it was far, far too late. I would imagine that's very much part and parcel of the problem John Nathan-Turner's having (I saw bits and pieces of the recent season [*22*] and it's not the way I would have done it).

> *"I know that folk go on and on about the humour in the programme, but I think it was the natural thing to step into the breach"*

If you take a fairly significant element out of a programme there is a void by definition. Bob Holmes, whom I envy without any detriment to the script editors I worked with, was the best, without any shadow of a doubt. The master, in all his various guises. He's a sadistic old bugger, but he's such a lovely bloke when you meet him and talk to him - you can't understand how this monster can be so charming! Having with his deft hand done these wonderful stories with all sorts of horrific nasties, and then being denied that, decided that he couldn't stand it any longer (he'd already stayed on a year longer than he'd intended to). We had not only to do without him as script editor but also not get that many scripts out of him, so the one thing compounded the other. He was committed with Thames for, it seemed, like a year after he stopped script editing. We wanted to get him but he just wasn't available, and I think Bob had come to the same conclusion that I did that you can only do so many DOCTOR WHOs before you go mad! He'd done three years solidly and, being Bob, he'd written a tremendous amount of stuff, even the stuff that didn't go out under his own name, and he said it himself - he wanted a break. I then had to find other writers - some who had worked on the show before, some who hadn't - and say to them, when they asked 'How far do we go with the violence?', 'Not as far, do it and then let us pull it back'. Quite often there would be moments in any script, in almost any scene, in which you could have made it much more sadistic, more violent, bloodcurdling or whatever and we didn't.

I got several letters from Mary Whitehouse while producing the show. The last one I got into very hot water with the BBC about because I insisted on replying to it personally. I gave as good as I got; she wrote an extremely pompous and rude letter, and I wrote back equally pompous and equally rude! I can't remember what she was on about to be honest, something about violence, but it was along the lines that it lacked professional integrity and responsibility and all that sort of stuff. I felt it'd had enough integrity and responsibility to suit me and I'd rather she didn't try and teach me to suck eggs!

I know that folk go on and on and on about the humour in the programme, but I think it was the natural thing to step into the breach. I spent most of my time *stopping* Tom putting in humourous business (that seemed to me my function in life at that time!). At one point he suggested that the companion should be a cabbage or a parrot to sit on his shoulder, something he could talk to, so I said 'Yes, fine, I'll think about it...', and I'm still thinking about it! I didn't have characters wandering around, as I saw in the recent series, looking at people as menus! I think that's a terribly witty and funny idea, certainly a lot wittier, funnier or more comic than most of the stuff we were doing. We'd do very clownish things, but always on the basis it was the sort of quirky thing the Doctor would do. I was never very conscious that humour was a problem in the way that it was developed or the reaction to it. It was adult humour that children could perhaps comprehend. If they didn't understand it it didn't frustrate or annoy them, and it certainly didn't get in the way of the story.

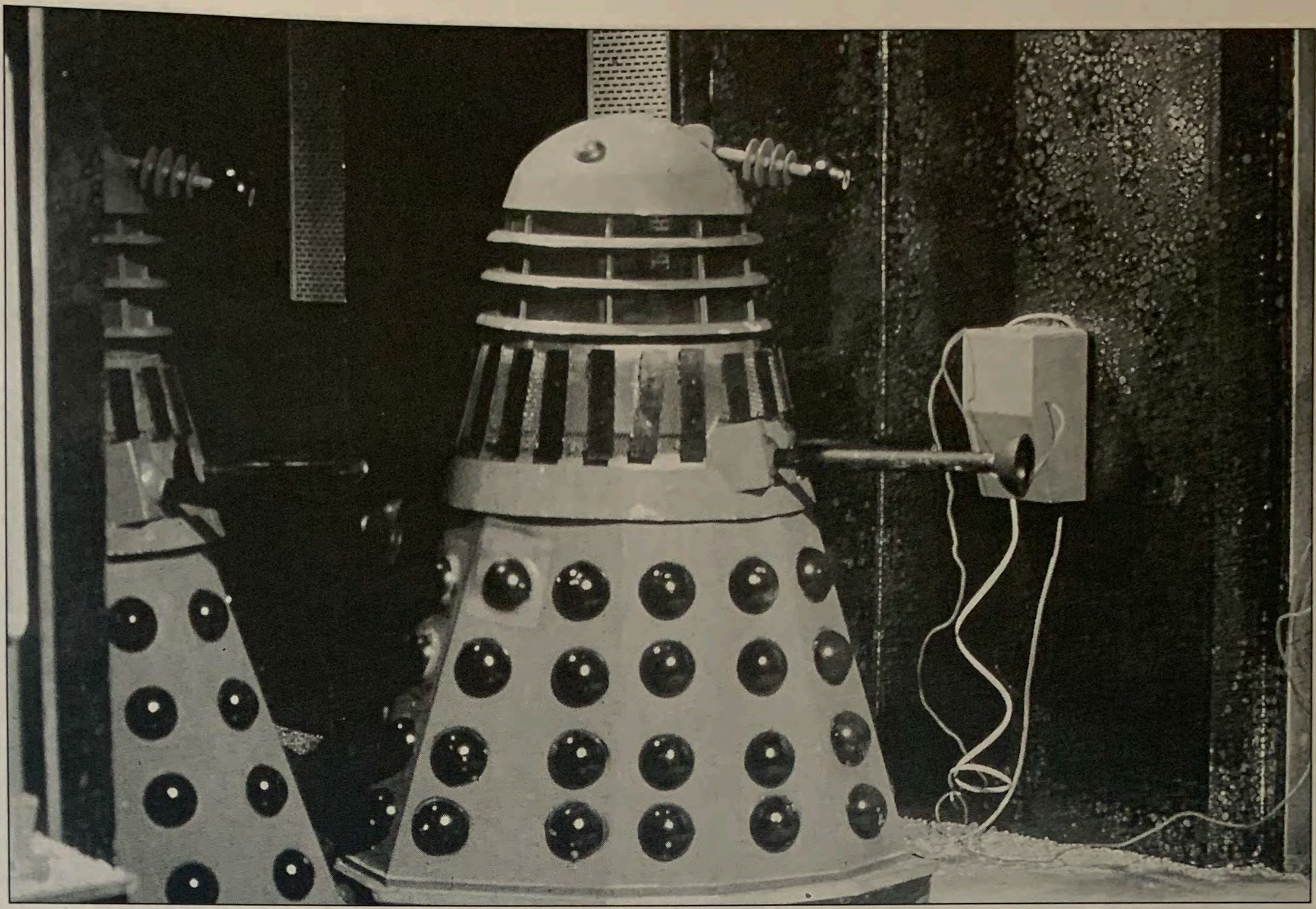
I think the people who were most frustrated and annoyed about it were the people in their mid-to-late teens (fans), where it is very tricky to find any humour that succeeds with that age group. For example, 'undergraduate' humour I find a bit mindblowing, trying to think how on earth people can really like that. It's personal taste. Public feedback was mostl from the fans, but if you'd made the pr gramme along the lines demanded - n suggested or requested by some of th fans, but *demanded* - by then we woul have satisfied five people and offended th other nine million!

You have to be very wary if you start making any general popul programme for a committed group of people; you're going to be trouble and the fans are going to end up hating you!

I came in for a fair amount of stick whilst I was there, but it w amusing for the first two or three years when I left. I kept o meeting fans for interviews and it would always open with 'I thin you've been done a lot of disservice and I want to put the recor right'. What had they been saying about me? I had no idea wha the criticisms were! If I'd taken too much notice of them and bee sensitive about it I'd have shot myself. Everybody likes to be liked.

The budget certainly affected me, but budgetary considerations were all more a matter of common sense. They were restrictive, obviously, but from that point on hyper-inflation started to bite. The previous year Philip had been able to put two fingers in the air to inflation, but after that each of the years I had the programme we were cut back by something like eight to ten per cent when inflation was anywhere running at 25%, so you're faced at the end of the year with making the programme for something like 30% less, which is nutty! One of the very principle reasons that I left after three years, although I was offered to stay another year, was that I hadn't any more ideas as to how the programme could be made ingeniously on this budget.

I WAS ASKED to take it over in late October of 1976 and Philip was due to leave in mid-January. He had had enough. My understanding was he'd already done a year more than he'd intended (I think he joined for two years and at the end of the second year he was asked to stay on for a third). I didn't think there was much point watching the old tapes because there are so many of them. You'd have to say 'Right, what am I going to do, produce DOCTOR WHO or sit down for three months and make an encyclopedia on the blessed thing?' I wasn't that concerned, I'd seen enough of them and the race history was there, and I think our track record on continuity was pretty good. I used to get questions very shortly after I'd left the programme from the fans saying 'In such and such an episode, such and such a character wore a purple cloak. Back in 1973 he wore a red cloak. Could you explain the deep significance of the change?' I'd reply saying 'The costume designer got it wrong'!



The Daleks succumb to inflation (*Destiny of the Daleks*, 1979)

The biggest problem when I went into the programme was that Bob Holmes was busy writing *The Talons of Weng-Chiang* and he didn't come free from the last recording until mid-January, so I didn't have a script editor for almost three months. Of course I could chat to Bob but his eyes would glaze over because he was so obviously into the problems of *The Robots of Death*, *The Talons of Weng-Chiang* or whatever - the last thing he wanted to know about was next season! We did, eventually, commission Terry Dicks on the vampire story, but Graeme McDonald, almost as soon as he took over, said 'By the way, you're not doing that Dracula story this season. Hold it over for next season', because they were doing the 'real' Dracula and didn't want a 'send-up' version. So that was our only script suddenly shot down, hence *Horror of Fang Rock* came into being. I recognised the first episode when they eventually made it (*State of Decay*).

Overspending did not really impinge on any of the prerogatives. What was much more of a problem - throughout the whole history of the programme - was the constant over-runs; designers sitting up till 4:00am with their drawings, camera crews staying on till midnight to record the programme and so on. In the absence of a script editor I couldn't concentrate on the stories, so I thought it might be wise to concentrate on the crewing, but I couldn't get camera crews, I couldn't get designers and I couldn't get lighting directors. They didn't want to work on the programme anymore, it was too much like hard work and they'd, quite literally, had enough. Some of our special effects were tremendous considering that people like Roger Murray-Leach - who nearly had a nervous breakdown with *Weng-Chiang* - had said they wouldn't do the programme ever again. The younger guys were fine but none of the experienced guys wanted to know about it. That, I thought, was a disaster, because it meant the programme would suffer as the problems kept on repeating themselves; you would get unexperienced crews in the studios who would automatically overrun on such a complicated programme.

I'd worked on all forms of drama there were - OB, film, video, period, contemporary, the lot - but I still felt as if I'd walked out of the Stone Age when I started the show. I had to put my foot down very severely on the first studio - Derrick Goodwin on *The Invisible Enemy* - which was hugely demanding technologically. I said 'We must *not* accept the fact that DOCTOR WHO is going to overrun', and gradually we got the guys to accept that we were aiming to do the scenes and finish when we said we would, but it was tremendously hard work. I was a dripping mess at the end of that first studio, but we got out on time. After that it just built gradually until we got a pretty good machine running by the time the third season came along.

Then I had to put my foot down again because all the the design and camera crews had gone to make BLAKE'S 7. I remember wandering through the BLAKE'S 7 studio thinking, 'Well hello, we used that last week!' They had a lot of things from one Pennant Roberts did (*The Sun Makers*) — they cannibalised all of his sets!

I've never said it about any other programme because everyone thinks his own programme is unique, but DOCTOR WHO goes beyond that - it *is* unique. It's a very, very curious chemistry, and a lot of directors are frightened of it. The sheer technology that's needed is miraculous, having to grapple with very strange concepts, and nothing in their history has led them to train for this. There are only six directors a season. If you want to get the directors you really want, you've got to book them blind and they haven't got the faintest idea what script they're going to do because the script is, by a long chalk, not even ready. In between whiles there is many a slip; the director will turn up and say 'Look, I know I said I was going to do it but I've actually just been offered so and so which I'd rather do...' You might get a director whose strength would be a particular area - say characters and character development - and you'd match him to a story that would obviously suit him, and then that script falls by the wayside or needs further work on it and suddenly that guy will have to do a story crammed with technology, and vice versa of course. It was much more by the seat of your pants than any other show I worked on. You normally matched and costed the director to the script.

In the first season it seemed common sense, as I was a new boy, to use a good strong mix of people who'd done it before - I didn't think there was much virtue in all of us leading the blind! After the first season I tried to continue, when I thought I knew a little more about the show, the old/new mix so, almost invariably, you'd have a director who'd done it before with a designer or costume supervisor who hadn't, or vice versa. There was always an 'old hand' there to hold the hand of the new guy.

The Doctor and K9 meet Polly Jones and her red-setter, Rosie (August 1978)

THE POINT of bringing K9 in really was to make a popular companion, but also one we could leave behind. When you have a third human companion then you've got to split the story, in my opinion, too many ways. The great problem with K9 was that if you were not very careful, there isn't a sufficient reason why he shouldn't solve the entire problem of the four episodes in the first fifteen minutes of each story, so quite often we'd break him down, give him laryngitis...*anything* to disable him from time to time! We made *The Invisible Enemy* first that season, and the only reason that we didn't use him in *Horror of Fang Rock* was he couldn't keep going up and down those stairs in the lighthouse, just like a Dalek! Terry Nation wouldn't have K9 because he was too much competition for the Daleks, and one of the reasons we could afford to go to Paris for *City of Death* was that we wrote it specifically to exclude expensive things like set dressing, costume dressing, props, electronics, special effects...so we ended up going to Paris without K9, and without almost anything else (just a few cameras)! We came back and discovered, by the time John Nathan-Turner had done his sums, that we'd shot it cheaper in Paris than we would have done here. I can't see anything wrong with filming abroad - as long as the script is good enough. If it's not then you're burnt, *badly*, that's the risk.

> *"Terry Nation wouldn't have K9 because he was too much competition for the Daleks"*

It was Ian Scoones who originally came up with K9, a very clever guy. In some ways I regret not taking his design of a wonderful sort of armour-plated Doberman Pinscher, gigantic and fierce, but it was just too savage and was big enough to pretend there was a midget inside. They wouldn't believe me when I said I wanted it radio-controlled because I didn't want it to be seen to have a man inside. He was very much a prototype then - nobody had tried th complexity of radio control before on location or in the studio. W thought most of the problems would arise on location, in fact was in the studio. The electronics would go crackers when K9 w inside a camera's cable loop, so the poor director would have take that into account as well as everything else and force h camera cables around K9, which he didn't like very much! I thi his advantages outweighed his disadvantages. He was never whol good for the show and, I don't think, very bad for it.

The Invasion of Time was written because a great story called The Killer Cats of Ginseng came in completely different, with Wembley Stadium now full of killer cats! Even if we could have shot it it wasn't strung together enough, so Tony Read and I got together. I had in my mind a story I was going to hold over till next season and Tony went away to write it, but it wasn't what I'd wanted so I took it away on the Monday evening and brought it back the Friday morning. I knew by then, because of the annual strike, that we would have this mad thing of the two-week OB first followed by a week's filming and three days in the studio, meaning very severe restrictions on what effects could be done on film, which we wouldn't have time to treat. All the effects, etc., I put into the story had therefore to be on OB so I wrote it with those massive constraints. That was one of the reasons I had to devise the interiors of the TARDIS to fit in all those storerooms which all, surprise, surprise, looked exactly the same. I thought each of the inside of the TARDIS's storage-chambers should be like the inside of either an oil-tanker or a gasometer so they could be stocked full of goodies, but we couldn't find anywhere to shoot it. It looked a bit like an ex-mental hospital from Redhill!

I'd seen *The Deadly Assassin* at the time I was going to take it over. We kept the Time Lords in *The Invasion of Time* but they were still obviously a bunch of old women, Bob Holmes having debunked them hugely. I'd heard Bob use Rassilon, the Laws of Rassilon and so on, and the rest I invented. Time Lord mythology is exactly the equivalent of our Holy Shroud of Turin, so I used that as a background. We adhered to continuity providing it didn't get too much in the way. I think, if you start treating it like a thousand-part episode, then you're making it for a very, very small part of the audience, and you're also putting so many constraints on writers, designers and the directors that I think you start to suffer. I noticed a few things recently where conventions had been broken. I believe one of the immutable laws is that the Doctor cannot, and must not, travel within his own time continuum, because otherwise why did he not go back a minute before the story started, etc. There are so many paradoxes in time travel and you mustn't break them. That sort of reversed continuity, I think, is very important, but as to making sure the Toymaker's robe is exactly the same now as the one back in 1966 would be a bit ludicrous!

I tried, on Bob's advice, to do a dog-leg - a four episode story that seems to be almost at an end, and a new story zapped on for the last two parts - but it didn't work. In an ideal world you'd say 'Let's make each story for as long as it will take', but that seemed to be inviting a confusion in the audience Some stories are a good three-parter, some a two-parter, some a four-parter. It would be easier for them to know they're watching episode one of a story to run for four weeks. Six-parters are very difficult to write for because a story that will sustain three hours of television has got to be a damn good story. Most feature films, don't forget, are less than two hours.

That season hadn't used any of the old villains at all so it was a good opportunity to keep the continuity of at least one of them going. I chose the Sontarans as an afterthought as they're my favourites of all the DOCTOR WHO villains, so I phoned Bob and he said 'Sure, carry on'. At least the Sontarans can articulate - unlike the Daleks they can give a good after dinner speech! I think I'd like to have listened to Stor give his version of how it was, although I kept saying to Derek Deadman, who is a lovely, lovely guy, 'Sontarans should *not* have a Suffolk accent!' I liked the original costume more than the one we used, and I also liked the ones I saw recently in *The Two Doctors*. They worked better this time round.

> *"I can remember having to go through rehearsals for The Stones of Blood with that 15th birthday cake, which I had to take out because I thought it was too silly, too humourous and too self-congratulatory"*

I'd wanted Louise to stay for the next season and she didn't really want to, and by the time she'd actually made up her mind to go we'd gone too far and lost any time to write a special script, which would have been better. I thought 'Well, if she's going it's best done quickly and get it over with', so I married her off at the end.

The Key to Time season was a rod for my own back. Having worked on the show for a year, I was in some way offended by the concept of a guy wandering around the Universe with virtually absolute authority and no responsibility. It seemed wrong that he should be able to win every time without any sort of moral responsibility. Something I'd been interested in all my television life is series and serials and it seemed an ideal opportunity to link the two together, so you've got a nice big bonus for the fans who want to stay from episode one to 26, and anybody who can't afford the time can nevertheless enjoy each episode as it comes along. Unfortunately that meant Season Sixteen had to be shot in exactly the same order it was put out and you couldn't juggle the scripts as they came in — if one needed more work it couldn't be sent further down the 'production line' and one brought forward. Usually, the first three in a season you could juggle the transmission dates and towards the end of a season you had to put them out as they were finished, up to the point where, in the final six-parter, you were dubbing it the night before transmission.

I can remember having to go through rehearsals for *The Stones of Blood* with that fifteenth birthday cake, which I had to take out because I thought it was too silly, too humourous and too self-congratulatory. We thought about a special story a lot for this season but I didn't like the idea. I just thought nowhere does it matter in the cosmos or the history of the Universe that DOCTOR WHO has been shown on BBC tv for fifteen years or it is the hundredth time the human race has seen him. You can't break the convention of disbelief. For example, you can't have Tom Baker walk on and say 'Oh, another bloody set the BBC have given me'. It's alright for John Cleese to do that or Ronnie Barker, but not Tom Baker playing DOCTOR WHO!

There were a lot of problems on *The Power of Kroll* - that was the first and last time I took a holiday! When I was on the programme I took about four days off in all, and the big thing that drove me away from the programme eventually was I could no longer do with working every weekend and Bank Holiday!

I didn't know the Guardians had come back during Peter Davison's time. I own the rights to them! I thought of them as I thought of a great deal of other things, the character of Romana for example. In each and every case I wrote a description of the stories or whatever and sent them straight off to BBC Copyright. I liked the six-parter (*The Armageddon Factor*) very much. The stories I like most are the ones that have a bit of style and flamboyance about them.

THE STORIES that we were able to get for the seventeenth season I found rather more attractive. I was much happier with that season than I was with the others. I suppose I'd got used to the show and the crews had got used to it.

The Creature from the Pit, the first story into production that year, was the only story we had at that stage! The worst thing about the show was chasing the scripts. I wouldn't normally expect to have to write a script a season! The script specified that it had to have a tentacle and the tentacle had to give some idea of the size of the monster. It wasn't the size that was the problem so much as this *huge*, gangrenous, syphilitic phallus! We had a tremendous barney about it with VFX, and I think it was, in part, a breakdown in communications between the director Chris Barry and Visual Effects — they obviously had not seen enough stages of the development or they would've seen that it wouldn't have worked when it came into the studio. I think somebody, somewhere in design, could actually have spotted it beforehand!

I'd resisted a Dalek story for as long as possible. The only thing worse than a Dalek is a Cyberman! Nobody has yet figured out that if you want to save yourself from a Dalek, you hop on a 42 bus - because a Dalek can't go very fast and they can't climb up on the platform! I had a lot of pressure to bring back the Master as well. I felt, personally, that if they posed a threat once and the Doctor saw them off, if you bring them back either the threat wasn't big enough or they take a very long time to learn their lesson! I would have thought, by now, that the Daleks would have gone back to the great Dalek bureaucracy in the sky somewhere and filed a memo about this Doctor character which said 'We're obviously on a loser there, chaps. Let's cut our losses and go and conquer the rest of the universe - leave Earth alone because it's just not worth it'! Douglas Adams and I tried to figure out one day why anybody would want to take over the Earth, and we could well see an argument for Canada; lots of resources, not many people, nice rich life, fresh air... Super. But the rest of the world? Famine, pestilence, disease - ugh!

I'd seen *Genesis of the Daleks*, but it was Terry Nation who brought back Davros. We didn't use Michael Wisher because he was in Australia. I suppose I can take some stick for the battered Daleks, but I just didn't reckon they were worth the investment. I think Douglas wrote Romana's regeneration scene in the way that Tom had come in five years previously. To start getting sexist about it and to say that women can't regenerate is awful — women change their clothes all the time! It was jokey, but the whole concept of regeneration's a bit jokey, isn't it? You've got to get out of all that pathos of regeneration, otherwise you'll raise questions in the minds of the kids that are watching. It's like saying that you must never investigate the Doctor's sex life — if he's got two hearts what else has he got two of?!

David Fisher had done 'Prisoner of Zenda' (otherwise known as *The Androids of Tara*) which I liked very much the previous season, I thought it had style. I know it got a tremendous amount of stick from the fans but the ratings were jolly good. We then said to David, 'This time we'd like Tom to meet someone like Bulldog Drummond in a Twenties setting'. We were always talking about villains and what their motives are. The most difficult thing about writing for DOCTOR WHO is why the guy wants to do what he's doing, because usually there isn't a very good reason except it's just there. This is absolutely no detriment to David whatsoever but the script that came in, quite late in the day, would not have made very good DOCTOR WHO (it would have made a cracking Bulldog Drummond!). The gambling casino sequences set in Monte Carlo didn't work, so Douglas and I started from scratch with only a few days to do it in. Michael Hayes had already joined and he wanted a clue as to what he would be directing!

Graeme McDonald didn't want the script editor or the producer to take the credit on *City of Death* because of a political thing with the Writer's Guild. Why it should be different on DOCTOR WHO than other programmes I do not know. I keep seeing script editors' names on scripts all over the place, but that was a dictate at the time. Graeme said 'David Agnew' was one of the names he'd had one of his script editors use before, and how would that do rather than go through the phone book? He got quite cross when I said, in one of my facetious moments, 'Why not let's use the name Richard Thomas... - which happened to be the first two names of my then three-year-old son - ...just to prove for all the critics that any three-year-old can write for DOCTOR WHO!'

Horns of Nimon I thought was a very, very clever concept, but it was another of those costumes which we were trying to stylise and de-humanise with a limited degree of success. I think the most boring of all the monsters are the guys in drag. Monsters as human beings I think are great, Weng-Chiang himself for example, but another guy in another rubber suit...that's why I hated the Cybermen so much. We had a choreographer in to orchestrate the Nimons' movement. It was a brave idea and it just didn't work.

Douglas and I wrote *Shada* in six days, and it worked (we wrote *City of Death* in the same time). Doug took the single credit for *Shada*. We came to an agreement over that one because I was leaving and it wasn't quite so important to me as it was to him to get a credit.

I read in an issue of *DWB* where somebody said that the season would have seemed much more successful had that finished it, and I couldn't agree more. Yes, *The Horns of Nimon* was a very weak script, a very weak programme, and that's why we buried it number five. I don't know why on earth John Nathan-Turner didn't finish off *Shada* - with Tom and Lalla there I would have thought it would be a very cheap show with all the footage on board.

The filming looked very promising. The previous two seasons we had been able to skate around the strike that happened every Christmas over that bloody electric clock, either by rewriting or rescheduling. As I said earlier, in my first season they decided to put the whole production order in reverse, which was an absolute nightmare, but we could not get out of this one. The doors of the studio were locked and we just couldn't get in there. We turned up regularly in order for the actors to fulfil their contracts because legally I had to say to them, 'Look, be there and I'll send you home', which was heartbreaking - one of the worst experiences I think I've ever come across. It was in the last studio when we were told that they would not be remounting straight after Christmas as had been promised, they were going to put it into next season. That's when I said to Tom, 'Look, the dates are now free - we *can* go to Los Angeles!', and we went off to the first convention in America. I was determined not to go out on a dying fall. I thought going to America was at least better than sitting in the office.

What happened was we got an invitation, and it was going to be the first US DOCTOR WHO convention. We had to write back politely saying 'Terribly sorry, we're in the studio. It takes precedence'. The strike happened and we said 'Why not?', so we called them to tell them we were coming and they didn't believe us. They had had people like Bill Shatner and Leonard Nimoy from STAR

STAR TREK convention and they hadn't showed up, and they were only coming from state to state! We called them again to confirm we were coming, flight times etc. (the flights were entirely our own expense). We were supposed to be in the studio Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, and the Wednesday morning the strike happened, so that afternoon we had our photographs taken for the passports and the visas and Jane Judge, our secretary, took them down to the American Embassy. On Friday I phoned BBC Enterprises to let them know we were going and they phoned back and asked if we would mind if one of their guys came along as well. So Terry Sampson came along too and eventually BBC Enterprises agreed to pay Tom's air-flight and hotel and to pay half of my air-flight — I suppose they thought I might be marooned out there and they may never see me again, which was a good idea!

I was only ever invited to the first one. Sure I mind that JNT now takes all the credit for Tom's success over there, but I'm not going to make a big thing about it. I'm sure, during my time, I must have taken the credit for Philip Hinchcliffe. If I didn't I was a twit!

The Americans like DOCTOR WHO because it doesn't compromise. It doesn't try and be American. It doesn't try and be anything except what it is. It is just uniquely British. I can't think of any other country in the world who would make a daft programme like that (joke!). It's utterly British in its concept and quirkiness, the eccentricity, devotion to characters and so on rather than action. Halfway through my second season *Star Wars* erupted and I said 'One thing we are *not* going to do is to go into big model work or special effects - stick strictly to our *own* strengths', and that's why they like it.

> *" I didn't know Dudley Simpson was going to be dropped after I left."*

I DIDN'T KNOW Dudley Simpson was going to be dropped after I left. I found him absolutely invaluable because he was so quick. He knew the whole ethos of the series so well and he did exactly what I wanted each time. It wasn't obtrusive music, ever, which is the hallmark of good incidental music.

I'd always reckoned you could get away with 15% change season to season and remain essentially the same show. The massive change after I left was the new producer's prerogative. I don't know how you quantify it really. I didn't change the titles, for example, as I didn't think there was anything wrong with them at all. They wanted to change the scheduled time of going out whilst I was there, which I resisted tooth and nail. I think it was a vast mistake. It was suggested to be by Graeme McDonald, a) that it went out during the week, and, b) that it went out twice-weekly. I thought both ideas were terrible and said so, which didn't do me any favours at all. It's tradition — it's like doing the children's Sunday Classic on Friday afternoon. It's silly! I think that had a lot to do with the falling figures.

I think the programme has great virtue in the character of the Doctor in that, somehow or other, you have got to persuade the majority of people who are watching, 'Folks, this week the Universe is under threat. Our man DOCTOR WHO can save it if you stay with him!' If you can't make the threat serious enough or the guy who's playing the part doesn't make you believe that the threat is serious, you're not going to take it seriously yourself and you're not going to much care whether or not you tune in the next week to see what happens. I think, perhaps, an element of that crept into it with Peter Davison.

In the three years I did the show there wasn't one original story, there were only variations on themes that had always been tried and tested. One of our favourite quotes, Douglas I think said it first, was 'We only ever used original ideas on DOCTOR WHO. Not necessarily our own original ideas!' We always borrowed and put it in our mould, and that's what drama's all about.

That's perhaps why, one day, I was phoned up, out of a clear blue sky, by one Eric Saward, asking me if I'd like to write a script. Because of continued pleadings from the fans, he said would I try and devise a story to feature the Toymaker. I'd seen a clip of Michael Gough on one of the BLUE PETER programmes or something, so I knew who he was, and Eric sent me the original scripts and what remains of the tapes. Watching the programme made in 1966 it was alarming to think you could fill half an hour of television with a fellow and a girl and another fellow playing hopscotch - you couldn't *dream* of getting away with that today! And he said, 'Furthermore, John would like, if it's possible, to feature the funfair at Blackpool'.

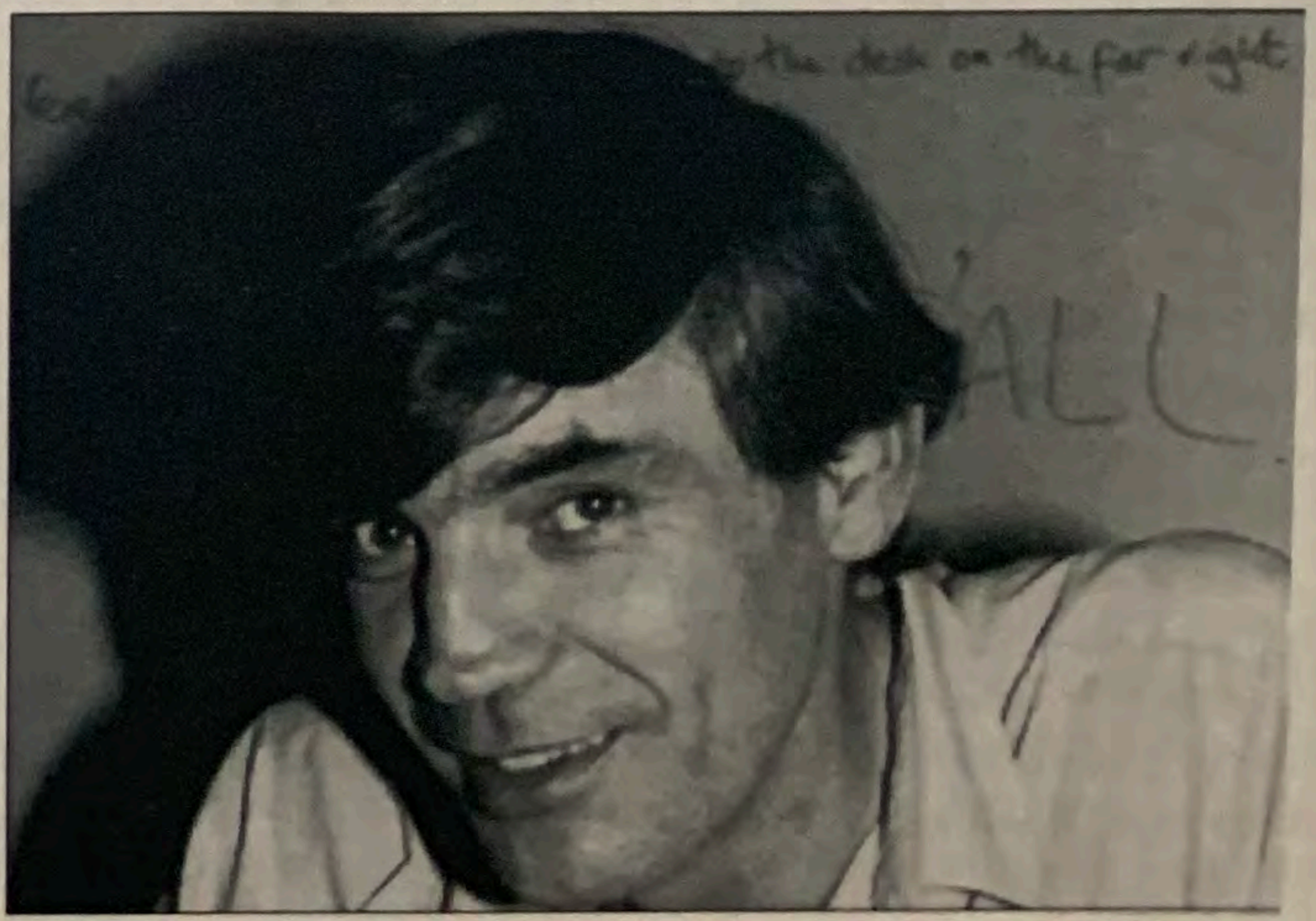
I prefer a basis to set off your imagination. One of the greatest difficulties in DOCTOR WHO is when nobody is giving you these script restrictions and you think, 'Well, there's a whole universe out there - which bit are we going to concentrate on now?' It's the free-est freedom in television, and the most difficult I think. I wrote, obviously, to a level that I'd been watching on the screen this season (*22*), revolving around one of the things I have touched on already; *why* is the villain doing what he's doing? Brian Hayles' original script is utterly unhelpful - it doesn't tell me anything whatsoever about the Toymaker except he's just stuck somewhere, which is never identified, playing games with the Doctor. We know that he is immensely powerful, even by Time Lord standards — perhaps the most powerful being the Time Lords have ever come across. We know that that, indeed, wasn't the first time the Doctor had met him. Michael Gough created the character of the Toymaker and I wrote the script with no-one else in mind.

The BBC pronounced themselves satisfied with it and they were going to shoot it, literally, as we speak. I never believed that the show would be cancelled, no way, but it seemed a bit ironic; I write a script and they cancel the show. Perhaps they heard? I don't think the script was *that* bad! It might not be the first to be made when they come back into production, but it's certainly going to be made...

DOCTOR WHO is such an extraordinary programme, and even with all the programmes I've done in between I've got a great, fond memory of my time there. I don't know that there were any stories that didn't work as a whole - there were certainly elements that didn't work in almost every story. I didn't like *The Power of Kroll* or *The Horns of Nimon*, and I didn't like *The Stones of Blood* very much, it just wasn't my cup of tea. DOCTOR WHO drove me crackers — it nearly killed me — but apart from that...the hardest work I've ever done in my life." ❑

● **Interviewed by Gary Leigh and David Miller**

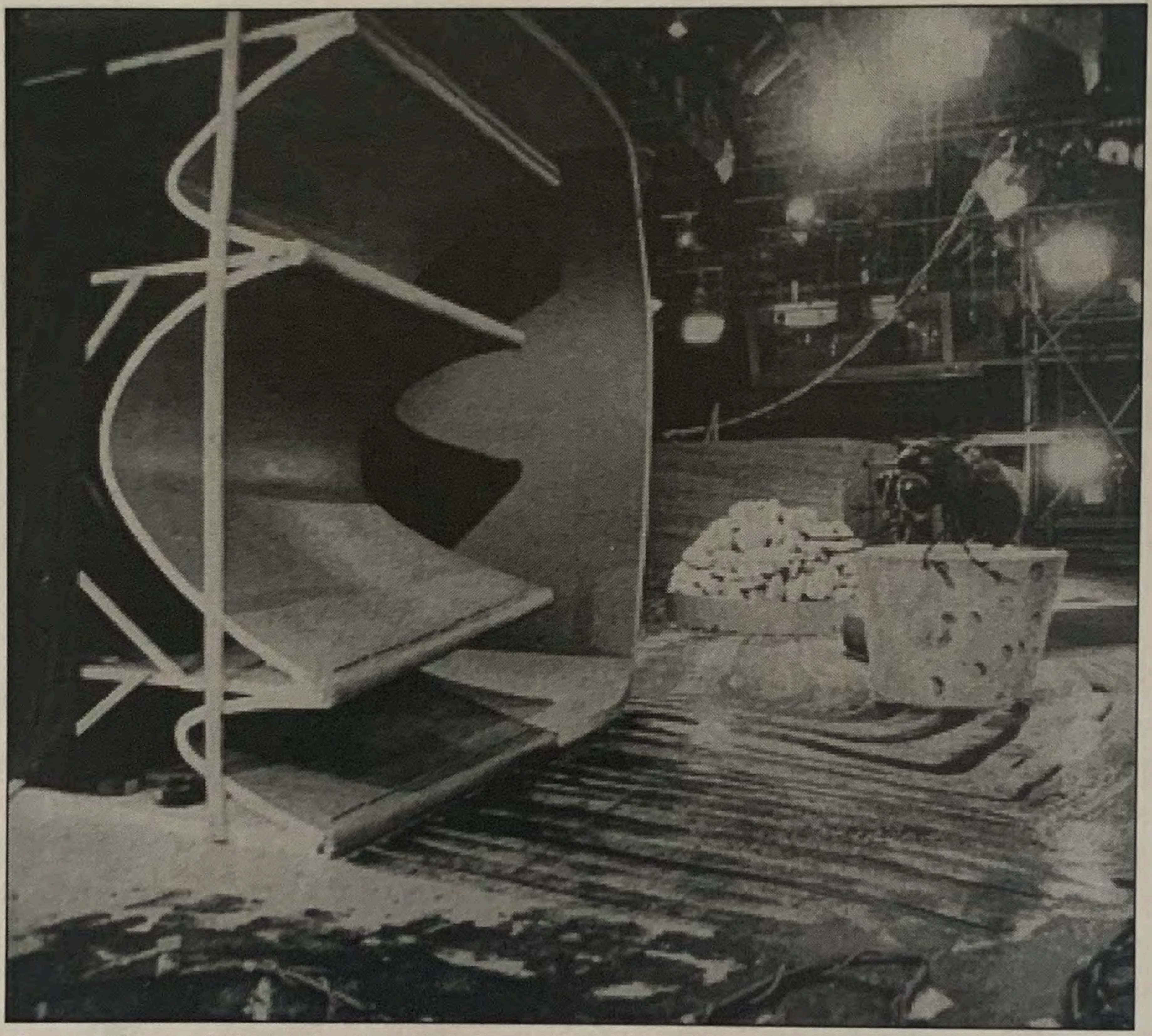
● **Postscript:** *After producing SUPERGRAN for ITV, Graham Williams left the world of television in 1987 for a peaceful, rural life running his own hotel in a small country village near Tiverton in Devon. His life was cut tragically short in August 1990 when, during a publicity drive for his hotel, a gun accidentally exploded while out with a shooting party.*


the desk on the far right
ALL

1963 the musicians 1980

Dudley Simpson

"I always put DOCTOR WHO first - I don't think I ever turned any down" - **March 1988**



A section of the studio set from Dudley Simpson's first DOCTOR WHO story as composer, *Planet of Giants* (1964)

"ONE DAY, when I was four years old, I went to my grandfather's house in Melbourne. He had a piano and, apparently, I sat down and played, with one finger, the National Anthem. I played by ear for several years until I was eleven and then my father had me taught.

I was the top amateur child musician in 1936. I had just won an interstate competition playing Beethoven, which gave me a start playing the piano professionally for radio stations in Melbourne for weekend kid's programmes. Then the war came and I didn't see a piano for a long time, until an American came to me in Darwin after I had been wounded (on the hand of all places!) and said, 'I believe you play the piano?' He was an opera singer and he wanted me to help him entertain the troops, so we toured around the north of Australia entertaining the American and Australian troops. Still during the war - after the Japanese were defeated - I was in New Guinea and they called me in to help run the broadcasting station. They made me a warrant officer and put me in charge of the breakfast programme and playing for the troops.

After the war I did a study course at Melbourne University where I got my honours diploma in music. One day a ballet dancer came in looking for a pianist to play for some classes, and I said I'd go along as I was anxious to earn some money. I got in to the Boravanski Ballet as a pianist and they made me a conductor, just before Margot Fonteyn came out to Australia. She in turn lured me to England, which is how I got to the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden.

While I was conducting for the Royal Ballet I was in somebody's house having a drink and Gerry Glaister, a producer at the BBC, was there amongst the ballet crowd. He told me he was working on a new series called MOONSTRIKE and that he knew nothing about music, had I any ideas? I'd never written music commercially although that was what I wanted to do, and I asked him how long I had. He said 'How about Monday?' (and this was Friday!). I went home to my little basement flat in Notting Hill Gate and I told my flatmates - one of whom is now my wife - that I had to do this but I hadn't even got a piano! They drove down to Chelsea where there was a second hand piano they'd seen advertised in the paper, they humped it down to the basement on their backs and said 'There you are', and left me to it!

Gerry had got all these directors lined-up to hear my idea and afterwards they told me to go and record it. I needed a French horn to really make it sound heroic so I phoned the great Australian horn player Barry Tuckwell (at the time he was the first horn player with the London Symphony). I told him I needed several players, he said 'No worries', and brought them all along to the recording session in Bond Street. It was played every week on the BBC for nearly two years so that established me. Later Gerry got me THE BROTHERS, which went on for years.

Gerry also got me other work, which I did whilst still working at the Opera House as resident guest conductor (I wasn't on the permanent staff). Then I became principle conductor of the touring section and toured northern Italy, Monte Carlo, etc. I was travelling around the world a lot at that time with the ballet, including productions with Margot Fonteyn and Rudolph Nureyev.

Mervyn Pinfield had been directing MOONSTRIKE along with Douglas Camfield, and it was Mervyn who called me in to do the music for *Planet of Giants (1964)*. I'd seen DOCTOR WHO and I thought it was a hoot at the time. Mervyn asked me in to see them filming it in the studio and I was greatly amused by it all. I remember Bill tripping over a light and he blamed everybody! He shouted, 'Will you get that light out of the way because I can't remember my lines!' Of course he couldn't remember his lines anyway, he was terrible, but he was a wonderful fellow though. Ron Grainer's theme music was excellent. He only wrote the theme line of course and Delia Derbyshire and Brian Hodgson put the thing together. If ever I was asked to re-arrange the theme I'd recreate it as Ron did it. Peter Howell did a good arrangement but it lost some of its charisma, the thing that used to make kids scuttle behind the sofa.

DOCTOR WHO was great for me because I had to make sounds with normal instruments - nothing radiophonic - and in *Planet of Giants* if you remember, they were climbing into enormous match-boxes and walking along the crevices of a pavement, and I had to make it all sound very dangerous with the help of little piccolo noises. I conducted eight musicians on that one.

It was a little difficult because in those days they couldn't show you a video of it, only a script, and they'd tell you what they were hoping to do and what sort of music they needed. The directors knew instinctively how they were going to direct it and the only problem was would it all fit? I had to go and watch it being done in the studio, where we actually played it in those days - there was no big editing job done in post production. Also, when you tried to edit music back then there was a big 'klunk' if you tried to chop anything out.

You would guess the timing. You could tell from the script where there would be a running sequence or a link, and I would say, 'How long do you want this?', and they would say, 'It's only a 25-minute programme so perhaps four minutes is maximum'. You never knew how long you were required to do music for, though the producers tried to restrict me to seven minutes per 25 minute episode as they sought not to overload it. On reflection, looking at some of the programmes, there was never much of a break without music; the Doctor might say a few succulent words to his companion, but then he's off again with more music!

The trouble with TV music in those days - and I think it is pretty much the same now - was that they worked out the budget for the sets, costumes etc., and the money that was left was for the music, so it was always on a shoestring. My whole time at the BBC was spent working on a shoestring budget, I never had an orchestra of any size. I did the music for the recent BODKIN ADAMS just before I came back to Australia and I had an orchestra of eighteen musicians, which I think was the most I ever had!

> *"They worked out the budget for the sets, costumes etc., and the money that was left was for the music, so it was always on a shoestring. My whole time at the BBC was spent working on a shoestring budget"*

I CAME INTO DOCTOR WHO towards the end of the first recording block. I never met Norman Kay (*An Unearthly Child, The Keys of Marinus, The Sensorites*) but I used to like some of his music (he wrote a lot of nice documentary music from Wales, I recall). Tristram Cary wrote a lot of electronic music, more than I did, and he hardly used any instruments. One little criticism of his music - which he probably won't like - was that you couldn't tell the difference between the sound he made and the sound they made for effects; it was so close that it didn't have any contrast whereas, with a live orchestra, the sound has more impact. I didn't know Richard Rodney Bennett (*The Aztecs*) but he is a very famous composer, and Stanley Myers (*The Reign of Terror*) has done extremely well for himself (he went on to write the marvellous music for *The Deer Hunter* and he's now the chairman for professional composers back in England). I knew Francis Chagrin (*The Dalek Invasion of Earth*) very well; I used to conduct the BBC Concert Orchestra and he had a saxophone quartet that he performed regularly with them. Raymond Jones (*The Romans, The Savages*) was not so much a composer, more of an arranger I'd say. He was quite a good friend of mine, though sadly he's dead now.

The trouble with not writing all the music on the show is that you can't use light motifs for people because the next composer that comes along won't use yours. When you watch STAR TREK, for example, the composer has done the lot and he can bring back motifs. I couldn't do that because I was being interspersed with other composers, such as Tristram Cary, but as I worked my way in I was trying to get a sort of Ron Grainer feel to the Doctor himself.

I was having to turn other work down, which I hated doing, because of my commitment to DOCTOR WHO. Innes Lloyd once offered me a documentary, which would have been virtually nearly half an hour of music, but I was writing DOCTOR WHO and BLAKE'S 7 concurrently. I told him I couldn't do it and he said '*What!*', and after that he didn't ask me for ten years, and then two or three years ago he asked me to do the music for AMY. I always put DOCTOR WHO first - I don't think I ever turned any down. It was the greatest challenge of my life. Every story had something about it and I always had to come up with something different to compliment the story.

The historical stories, like *The Crusade* (*1965*), were especially challenging because you would have to try to set the flavour of the period with the music. Also, if you set it in a period style, it is hard to make impacts when there is a dramatic event. You would be playing lute-type music when there had to be a musical sting, so it didn't always work.

We made *The Chase* very light. It was probably our directive to do that because people were getting very scared of the Daleks, so we were told to ease off and not make it too heavy. For one of the later Dalek stories (*Destiny of the Daleks, 1979*) I wrote some music as a take-off of Ravel's *Bollero*, because one of the problems with the Daleks as they moved was a sort of squeaky noise, and the more music we had the more it covered up the noise! I used some xylophone music to do the same thing for K9.

The Underwater Menace (*1967*)...

We had an old, old organ type thing at the Radiophonic Workshop. If you played the keys you couldn't change the sound at the same time so I had to ask Brian Hodgson to twiddle the knobs while I was playing to make a different sound. That was what I used to create the globule-like music, as I called it.

I loved doing those scary ones like *Fury from the Deep* (*1967*). If you think about it, if they didn't have any music on there would just be a slim, squelching noise, so it had to be very effective to make it work. Directors depend so much on music to set the mood - how they could use stock music, which they did frequently in Patrick Troughton's time, I've no idea. Perhaps I might have been off on tour then.

The Invasion (*1968*)...

Don Harper, a violinist (who was also an Australian), rang me up one day and asked if he could come and see me. He came to my house and said, 'I've got a few sessions but I don't know how to conduct'. I told him I couldn't teach him in five minutes but I'd try to give him a few clues, so I told him about up beats, down beats and things, and my wife said, 'What are you giving away all your secrets for?' I said, 'Poor old Australian, you gotta give him a chance. I'm becoming established so I'll give him a few pointers'. At the end of it, just before he left, he said, 'By the way, I'm writing an eight-part DOCTOR WHO!' A knife in the back!

That was directed by Douglas Camfield. Once we invited him and his wife for a meal with us and a couple of other people - Gerry Glaister was one - at our home in Middlesex. He pulled me aside during the evening and said, 'You are doing very well for yourself, aren't you Dudley?' I said, 'Well, I'm making a living'. He said 'You're making £20,000 a year, aren't you?' 'No, I'm not, nothing like!' He said, 'You *are*', and he never engaged me after that. It was a mistake to ask him to my house! I think he did it on purpose because he thought I'd had enough.

Some time later I was doing some episodes of TARGET Dougie was directing. He said, 'Are you doing the music?' I said, 'Yes, I am, the producer has asked me to do these' (this was Philip Hinchcliffe - one of my greatest fans!). Dougie then said, 'I'll tell you what I want...', and I set about writing exactly what he wanted. At the end of it he said, '*Fantastic*, that's the best you've ever done for me'. I said, 'It's the *only* one I've done for you in a long time!'

Roger Delgado (*The Time Monster*, 1972)

When you reach a level of success you've got to be very careful. For example, Derrick Sherwin and Peter Bryant were producing Paul Temple and had got thirteen episodes of rubbishy music, so they called me in and told me to take over. I was doing a lot at the time with Doctor Who and Paul Temple was 52 episodes, so I was very busy. I asked them both to my house in Weybridge, Surrey - I'd bought an even bigger house by this time - and they walked in and said, 'Bloody hell!' I never worked for those two again! I was probably at the top of the tree at that stage. I was on the screen more often than anybody and everyone knew me.

The Space Pirates (*1969*)...
We hired a soprano (*Mary Thomas*), double-tracked her and created this sort of eerie sound in outer space. It worked very well, I thought.

The War Games (1969)...
I used this harpsicord that made the basic theme quite eerie and effective. A very good story that, I thought. Patrick Troughton was a great man. He appeared on SuperGran, which I scored for shortly before I returned to Australia. Graham Williams, who produced it, came to me because the other composer committed suicide, and said, 'What are you doing these days, old chum?' I said, 'A lot of music', and he said, 'Well, I hope you are going to write a lot for me too - I don't know anybody else who could do this. You've got the humour, the lot, will you do it?' I did thirteen episodes.

AT THE TIME Jon Pertwee was coming in to Doctor Who, they used to take me down to the video room in the bowels of the BBC and show me the programme on two-inch master tapes whilst they told me what they wanted. Every time they tried to stop the tape at the moment they wanted the test card came up, because you couldn't pause-freeze in case the tape started to burn, so I would have to try to remember it all. It was a very antiquated idea. Then the head sound man at that time, John Eden, one day said, 'I've got it - time coding! We're getting it from Germany. It's got a print-out at the bottom of the screen of the time, the day, hours and seconds'. In the end, when they'd perfected it, they gave me a video to study with the director and we could get the timing spot on.

I liked Jon Pertwee, I thought he had a lot of charisma. He's a giant of a man anyway and it was easy to write music for him with that tremendous flamboyancy. He had some difficulty saying some words because he had a heavy lisp. He'd say, 'My god, there's a Ssstegosssaurusss'! Even though the music was no longer live, I'd still go on to the set, even when Tom Baker was there I always went in to see a bit.

I'd like to think it was because they liked my work that they kept asking me to do more and more when the series went into colour. I think producers had a lot to do with it mostly. They would usually say to the director, 'Don't bother about the music, get the production unit manager to ring Simpson and he'll write that'. Also, by that time, I'd got the Radiophonic Workshop all lined up, we had a rapport going and we complimented each other very well. Where occasionally other composers did come in, I think you will find that the directors who worked with them had used them before and liked what they did.

The Master's theme was entirely my own idea. I think I felt very sorry that I hadn't done a theme for the Doctor before, but as I said there were so many other composers involved that you couldn't really introduce one, but as it was becoming more my programme I stuck in a theme for Roger Delgado. No one asked me to, but I brought out a cue which was so effective that even Jon Pertwee was getting worried at one stage! I had a cute little theme for Bessie and a UNIT theme too. It does help to do that. The only one I regret not doing was the Doctor.

It was Barry's idea to have an entire season (*eight, 1971*) composed electronically. Brian Hodgson told him that he had some new instruments he wanted to use and Barry said he thought I was the man to do it. If you are using radiophonic music it has to be very effective because there is very little change in colour; it sounds like a synthesiser all the time. If you have five different synths you have got lots of musical colours but with just one set up you don't have that colour. I started adding instruments to it because I found it uninteresting and lacking in impact.

Malcolm Clarke's score on *The Sea Devils* (*1972*) was pretty disastrous. It was just triads going 'der, der, der, der...' all of the time. I thought it would die a death and he wouldn't do anymore and he didn't, although he came back much later. Of the others, Paddy Kingsland had his own studio in Hammersmith which I worked in for the SuperGran stuff and he helped me produce, Liz Parker did all the effects for Blake's 7 and Roger Limb did all the stuff for the Radiophonic Workshop. I knew them all.

Around the time of *Carnival of Monsters* (*1973*), Brian Hodgson left the BBC to create his own sound studio and Dick Mills took over and made it very much his baby. Brian Hodgson returned to the Radiophonic Workshop as the big boss after realising that he wasn't going to make a big success of his studio. (Although he is still a great friend of mine, I still think Brian helped oust me from Doctor Who by campaigning for his guys to have a go at writing the music. He probably collaborated with Nathan-Turner because they were all friends together).

By now I had very little time to do anything else aside from Doctor Who - I had to put out a score almost every week until the end of the season when I took a holiday. I would return from my holiday and they would ring up and say, 'Come on, we're off again!' Even where there was another chap composing a story for a couple of months there was always the next director waiting in the wings to advise me on his score, so it would overlap and sometimes it was incredibly close. We'd put the music and effects on during the Friday and it would go out on the Saturday. Doing so much you can't help falling into clichés, which is why it was probably good for my music that I stopped when I did.

The Green Death was my favourite Pertwee score. It was quite fun and stays in my mind a lot. Michael Briant, the director, was into John Denver at the time, and he said, 'Dudley, do you think you can do any music like John Denver's?' I actually heard John Denver the other night and was very impressed, I thought he sang so very well. I think I, personally, must have an inkling towards Gustav Mahler, because a couple of times since I wrote the music for a documentary on Robert Blake, people have said to the producer, 'Mahler isn't it?' He said, 'No, Simpson actually'! I'm also very into pop music as I have a young family. I like Whitney Houston and Mary Wilson.

Planet of the Spiders (*1974*) was also a funny one, I loved doing that. I got Tristan Fry (a percussionist) to bring in a little South American instrument that made a rattling noise for the spiders.

When it came to Tom Baker, I thought he played it a bit on the comedy side and I didn't think at first he was going to make it. I didn't think he had the tongue in cheek menace about him that Jon had, but when he got into it, after two or three programmes, he was really good. Although Jon Pertwee had a lot of charisma, I think Tom had the edge.

Dudley's finest hour? (*The Pyramids of Mars*, 1975)

Before I left England BBC Enterprises asked me into their offices for a chat about the possible sale of the early Tom Bakers to France. They couldn't lift the voices off from the music track to redub the dialogue into French and they couldn't find a copy of my music anywhere, so I had to lay down a completely new score for them on tape which will go on with the French dialogue. Even though Tom and co. are appearing but aren't speaking as such, they still have to be paid, and I'll have to be paid even though you can't hear what I wrote originally (when PAUL TEMPLE used to go out in Italy they scrubbed my name off and put some Italian bloke's name on instead!). I only specialize in keyboards. Every note you've ever heard on DOCTOR WHO has been written down (you can see the corns on my fingers!). The BBC kept the manuscripts of my work, but they haven't kept a lot of it or the tapes of the music. When I asked BBC Enterprises why, they said they'd need enormous warehouses to store them all.

So I've had a good opportunity to reassess Tom Baker and there are some beautiful stories in his era, and that is where I wrote my best stuff. They encouraged me and thanked me and Tom was always very appreciative; he was always coming after me and calling me 'My little Dudley!' He'd buy me a drink and tell me how I'd helped him make that particular episode, I liked that. Elisabeth Sladen, Louise Jameson...I knew them very well.

There was one instance (*The Android Invasion, 1975*) where Barry Letts called me at home to look at a scene where this man walked off the end of a cliff and went 'splaaat!' on the ground thirty feet below. He asked me to find some music to cover up this noise.

The Brain of Morbius (*1976*) was great. Before one of my trips to Australia, the Television and Film School here wanted me to give them a lecture. I went to Shaun Sutton - the then Head of Drama - and asked if he could arrange for me to have a mute tape of all the music from *The Brain of Morbius* so I could explain to them how I wrote it to fit the picture.

We didn't reuse the Master's theme in *The Deadly Assassin* (*1976*). It was Roger's theme and the producer agreed that we shouldn't use it.

The Talons of Weng-Chiang (*1977*) was the first time I'd been taken on location in DOCTOR WHO. We drove up to Northampton where we recorded in a real theatre and I conducted the little band in Jago's theatre. For doing that I had to be paid a special fee.

Philip's productions had a feeling of drama in them and he didn't mind you going all out to make the thing colourful and attractive, whereas Graham Williams was a good producer but I don't think he had that flair. Tom had literally taken over by then and I never had any direction from Graham; he just used to say, 'Take it home and get on with it'. That's all very well but you need advice to avoid losing the style of the production, and that affected the quality of my work. I tried to write music that fitted the situation and I wanted people to admire it as well as actually doing its job.

I think, towards the end of my time on DOCTOR WHO, the programmes were getting a bit silly so it didn't really over-inspire me. Sometimes a director would say, 'This is a terrible story, we need you desperately', and that is the worst thing you can say because it puts you on the spot.

In *City of Death* (*1979*) I tried to get a city skyline sort of feel to it. I couldn't work with the director on *The Horns of Nimon* (*1979/80*), Kenny McBain; he was very problematic and kept getting up my back somehow. I'd been commissioned to do what would have been my last one (*Shada*). I signed and returned the contract and they never followed through, so they owe me! I'd started writing the music for it when they cancelled it.

JOHN Nathan-Turner had been commissioning me through Graham Williams over the years to write each programme. He'd always ring up and say, 'Dudley, it's John, you know what I'm ringing you about - we want you to do the next DOCTOR WHO'. That went on incessantly until, one day, he said, 'I'd like to ask you out for lunch' (which I thought was unusual because no-one had asked me out to lunch before). At the end of the lunch he told me that he was taking over from Graham and that he didn't want me anymore. He said, 'I'm going to wipe the slate clean and so I won't be needing you anymore'. I think the problem with John was that he wanted all his friends around him. You can't manipulate composers that easily. The ironic thing was that I was prevented from using the Radiophonic Workshop, then I got the push and in came the Radiophonic Workshop to replace me! After he's gone I'd love to take on the challenge again!

Dudley's last score for DOCTOR WHO was to have been on the strike-hit *Shada*

When I finished on DOCTOR WHO - or should I say given the push - I had BLAKE'S 7 to get on with anyway. I did all four seasons.

I think the only problem I had at the time with staying fresh was that I couldn't find the variety with the orchestra I had, which were just a few players. The stories were becoming more and more complicated and I was not allowed to use the facilities at the Radiophonic Workshop anymore, which I thought was an intrinsic part of the programme. That seemed to ruin it for me.

Some might say I was paid very well for my work, that I did very well out of DOCTOR WHO and still am because of the residuals, and to be honest I am and probably will do for the rest of my life, but I still think of DOCTOR WHO as my baby. I set a style for the whole programme and felt a little bitter at losing that and a lot of my income. Not only that, I was then pigeon-holed because of DOCTOR WHO and BLAKE'S 7 as that sort of writer. Producers would often say, 'Oh, don't use Dudley Simpson - he's only a science fiction writer'. It took me a long time to recover.

Naturally I followed DOCTOR WHO afterwards to see how it worked, and I don't think it did work very well. As I've said, radiophonic music is synthetic music and there is very little emotion in it and therefore very little impact. I'm quite convinced it has deteriorated recently. I'm not going to say it's because I'm not working on it anymore, but I think it might have had some influence on it. My youngsters used to be glued to it (not because I wrote the music) but now they couldn't care less, they just don't want to watch it. I've noticed that all round no one seems to be concerned with it anymore. I think it's pretty obvious that the impact we made with our limited resources helped the programme a lot. (That new girl in it, what's her name, Bonnie Langford; she's got a voice like a little doll!).

The ones I enjoyed scoring most were *Carnival of Monsters*, *The Underwater Menace* and *Pyramids of Mars* (I wrote masses of music for that - it must have been going virtually non stop!). *Planet of the Spiders*, *The Deadly Assassin*, *The Brain of Morbius* and *Robot* I listened to recently and I thought were quite effective. *City of Death* was one of my best, I think, and *Destiny of the Daleks* was quite effective. *The Masque of Mandragora* came out quite well too.

Some people still believed in me. One of the directors who never stopped using me was Rodney Bennett. There was a director called Gareth Davies who Barry Letts used to engage a lot on the Classic series. He used me on *Oliver Twist* and *Goodbye Mister Chips*, and just before I came out to Australia I did two TALES OF THE UNEXPECTED; Gareth directed one and Rodney the other.

I had to make a decision about my future one way or the other because I was 65 last October, and I decided to get out of the rat race. I'd been in it a long, long time and I wanted to write something for myself for a change. We also had to make a decision about my son's secondary education, and I ran a company in England so I had to make decisions about pensions and things. I told my accountant to wind up the company and we packed it in to come out here.

I wrote to the ABC Head of Drama here and told her that I was available and that I'd like to meet her and she didn't reply for three months. When she did reply she said, 'Thank you for your letter, we have no opportunities for composers at the moment'. They're asking me to do guest appearances as conductor of the Australian Royal Ballet because I conducted ballet in Tokyo recently, which is what I started doing originally. I'm also going to be writing an opera with the director Rodney Bennett, and I've been asked to do a film in Malaysia as well (so I'm not entirely out of work!)" ❑

● **Interviewed by Dallas Jones and Gary Leigh**

● **Postscript:** *The Australian Ballet, television stations, Film Australia and producers all know I'm here, but it would appear that here is a 'closed show' situation, and there doesn't seem to be any way through for me in my own country. So I am returning to the UK this November, which, after all, is really where I belong, since I did live and work there for thirty years.* - ***Dudley Simpson, January 1994***

1979 **the companions** 1981

Lalla Ward

"Romana pottered about on other planets in the equivalent of Portobello Road" - October 1990

HAD YOU always been interested in acting?
I never was, really. I wanted to go to art school and draw. I honestly don't know how it turned into wanting to act, I sort of figured I could do both and always have done.

Was acting an unusual profession for someone of your aristocratic background (daughter of the late Lord Bangor)?
Not particularly. There are a lot of people with quite peculiar backgrounds that go into acting.

The first thing I ever did when I was about fifteen was a children's play at the Marlowe Theatre in Canterbury where I played a mermaid, not the most auspicious beginning really. Then I did - which shows how far back I go - an episode of DR FINLAY'S CASEBOOK. After that I went to The Central School of Speech and Drama in London. That was wonderful. I was terribly young, sixteen when I auditioned and just seventeen when I went. I didn't know anything about anything so one couldn't fail to learn something.

Vampire Circus was the first job I did after Central. We had two sports-orientated classes there, one was fencing and the other was acrobatics, which I loathed. We had to hit people over the head with chairs and things and do semi-gymnastics which I'm completely ungood at. Anyway, the part in the vampire film was as an acrobat, which the people at Central thought was hilarious. They said 'Now you'll be sorry you missed all those classes', but actually I had a double. It was made towards the end of Hammer's heyday in 1971.

What did you do in between that and DOCTOR WHO eight years later?
All the work I haven't done since I left DOCTOR WHO! I was an ordinary working actress at that time and I did a certain amount of theatre and all the stuff one does for television like THE PROFESSIONALS, THE PROTECTORS, THE DUCHESS OF DUKE STREET, ARMCHAIR THEATRE, 30 MINUTE THEATRE, that sort of thing. I also did a film with Otto Preminger called *Rosebud*, a tiny part in another film, *England Made Me*, and *The Prince and the Pauper* with Charlton Heston and Oliver Reed. Lots of work basically.

Princess Astra came about because the director, Michael Hayes, had seen me years ago in a television film about the poet Shelley. I hadn't been working for a bit, I'd been drawing, and I thought a DOCTOR WHO would be a rather nice way to return to acting. It was a great honour, they get really good people to do all the guest parts and also you learnt quite a lot of technical stuff which you don't do in other programmes. All the technology was at the innovation stage with Quantel and split-screen; it was very new and so we all learnt a bit.

When did you hear you'd got the part of Romana?
When I was doing *The Armageddon Factor (1979)*. Mary was dithering whether to stay on or not and we talked about it. She said 'You ought to go up for it if I decide not to', and I didn't think much more about it. I got on very well with Tom which was a help, so Graham Williams knew Tom and I worked very well together. Doing the story was like a six-part audition. I knew I enjoyed being in DOCTOR WHO.

Coinciding with your first full season Douglas Adams arrived and instilled a notable degree of quirkiness into the scripts.
It wasn't entirely Douglas, it was partly Tom and me. Quite often a child's programme can become quite culty with grown-ups. Really, to begin with, DOCTOR WHO was a children's programme. I watched it as a child and it was because it was aimed at children that it did so well. I think Tom always felt strongly that one should appeal to the children and thereby acquire the adult viewers. I think sometimes he wrongly got blamed for making the show quirky when in fact he was trying not to make the show over-serious and pretentious.

Was there a lot of ad-libbing?
Not really. In rehearsal there was, but in the studio we always

The teenage Lalla in 1968

knew exactly what we were doing. We did change stuff in rehearsal, but to a point where it became script, not ad-libbed stuff.

Do you think the money lavished on City Of Death was effectively at the expense of the other stories that season?

I thought they were grasping at straws at all stages! That's one of the nice things about DOCTOR WHO - you often get some good work out of that struggle. God knows, there might have been a lot of money spent on the Paris one but the schedule was unbelievable. We got more done in three days in Paris that you would do on a feature film in a fortnight. I can't remember how many actual minutes were shot there but it was a hell of a lot and the results were very good. Apart from the fun and excitement I remember it was indescribably cold. I had three thermal vests on and it snowed at one point so we couldn't shoot at the top of the Eiffel Tower, even though it was May! So it didn't seem as though more money was spent on it, although it must have been because it was shot in Paris and there was a lot of location stuff.

I must say that in terms of the end result I prefer the ones that are filmed on location. In terms of work I actually prefer to do ones that are in the studio, it's much more comfortable. Locations in DOCTOR WHO tend to be quarries in Dorset, which are really miserable and frantic and pressurised in the wrong way, whereas in the studio at least you are in control more or less.

Your first three stories as Romana were filmed out of order. Did you find that confusing?

Yes. Looking at them later I thought that it showed. *The Creature from the Pit* was the first one I did and I absolutely loathed that costume and the hair. Looking back on it I hadn't got a grip on what I wanted my character to be so it was neither Mary Tamm nor me. It was a terribly fudged characterisation. In a way it was helpful because by the time we came to filming *Destiny of the Daleks* I knew what I was doing. The characterisation didn't matter that much in *The Creature from the Pit* because by the time that went out everyone knew me.

The hilarity in the studio at the rather rudely-shaped creature has been much documented.

I remember sitting in the BBC canteen once and Michael Fish, the weather man, came up to me and said, 'Do you know it's made from meteorological balloons?'!

You had some memorable costumes during your time on the series. Did you have a large say in your wardrobe?

An entire say! Poor June Hudson, or whoever was in charge of costumes, used to come in and say 'We see you in a silver lame jump-suit', and I used to say 'Well I see myself in a school uniform, will that do?' They were absolutely marvellous though. I just thought Romana pottered about on other planets in the equivalent of Portobello Road. It is the only show where you can mix traditions and styles.

Was it difficult acting alongside such a dominant personality as Tom Baker?

Bloody difficult! I mean, inspiring in many ways and difficult in others, but never boring, which is all you can ever ask for with an actor, I suppose.

Tom has said he would ideally have preferred a parrot or a talking cabbage as his companion.

I suspect that he'd have been much happier married to one as well! He was energetically good at playing his own type of character - egocentric maniac -and would much prefer to act with anything other than another human being who might put some of their own personality into a scene. Basically we got on very very well and those scenes worked despite him dominating, which is the very nature of being the Doctor. All us companions knew we were playing second fiddle, like a feed in a comedy scene. You are there as a secondary character and one accepts that. It doesn't worry me in the slightest that the Doctor is much more important, I think that's how it should be. Those scenes worked with two people when both contributed to it and Tom can't be anything but pleased with that.

At what stage did love blossom?

God knows! We spent so much time in each others' company and got on so well together that we just couldn't imagine life without each other. It was a very silly reason for getting married, I mean it was alright whilst it lasted but it was never likely to last very long. Everyone said that and they were right. Tom is a marvellous character, I

The press launch for Season 17 (30th August 1979) learned an awful lot from him and we had a wonderful time while it lasted, work-wise and marriage-wise. But sometimes things aren't meant to be longer than a certain span.

On Shada...

I saw clips of that and all the Cambridge footage was absolutely lovely. I think it's become a classic because of its novelty value.

Around this time John Nathan-Turner was being groomed to take over from Graham Williams. Was it evident that major changes were afoot?

You never know to what extent things will change, but you know that if you have a new producer things will. John is very different from Graham but we knew John because he was the production unit manager and we liked him very much. He had a deep understanding of the programme having worked on it for so long in another capacity. People have their own opinion on who was the best producer but I thought John did a lot of good things.

I had a meeting with him very early on where we decided how many episodes I would do, so I was properly written out of it rather than deciding at the end of one story to go. We decided at that point that I'd do so many more stories and then I'd leave because that's what I wanted, more or less. It's always difficult, I suppose, for a producer to come in and be landed with these two major characters; on the other hand he's lucky he's got two people he doesn't have to wean in the show.

Season 18's scripts had a very scientific basis. Did you prefer this approach to that of its predecessor?

I think what also arrived were films like *Star Wars* and the whole widening of general interest in science fiction. When that happened, and with the sort of technology it produced, I don't think we could go on being the little outfit that we had been. It always struck me that from the beginning DOCTOR WHO had only been marginally about science fiction. It was really about people, people who happened to travel through time but basically adventure stories about people. It wasn't science fiction like *Star Wars* with amazing technology and they were struggling to keep up with the *Star Wars* Joneses. A lot changed with John that would have changed had John been there or not. Science fiction was suddenly in, technology became much more available and inevitably things had to move along.

Did you find it hard to suspend disbelief with K9?

No, partly because of John Leeson who was wonderful and used to potter around in rehearsal on his knees. I never found the slightest difficulty with K9, I liked him. It was slow but it meant you never had to run fast as K9 couldn't keep up. Trying to keep up with Tom was something else. I remember running around Paris with him and wishing K9 was in it because I was absolutely exhausted - Tom's so long-legged and fast!

They had to write K9 out of certain stories simply because he couldn't move fast enough. There was the trouble we had in *The Leisure Hive* on the beach when K9 had his new tank-like caterpillar tracks. He kept falling over, it was awful. It took ages and it was so cold.

Have you followed the show since you left?

Not really, a bit. I know Peter Davison quite well and like him very much so I watched some of his, but I really haven't watched it much lately. It's on at funny times. I liked the old days when you knew it was a Saturday and it was a sort of institution. I thought that change to mid-week was a great shame.

What are your memories of Graham Williams?

He was a sweet man. I always think it was the best time really. John and I get on very well but it's always the one who gave you the job for whom you always have a special empathy. He was just a very nice man and fair and easy to work with, good with Tom and just a good producer to have around. I really do miss the thought of him being around terribly, it was such a terrible way to go. So wasteful and awful.

What are your favourite memories of working on the series?

City Of Death, I suppose. The Paris business was fun and it was such a wonderfully weird story. I loved that man who played Kerensky (*David Graham*). I also liked the vampire one, *State Of Decay (1980)* - I thought the designs on that were absolutely wonderful. It had a wonderfully operatic feel to it I thought. It looked so good.

Lalla Ward as Ophelia in the BBC production of HAMLET (1981)

Life after WHO...

Quite a lot of theatre, practically no television. There is no life in television after DOCTOR WHO - I think most of the girls have had a bad time getting back into television.

You worked with Patrick Stewart in 1981...

Yes. When the BBC did HAMLET with Derek Jacobi I played Ophelia and Patrick played Claudius, the king. I know him quite well. He hadn't done much television at the time. I remember having a long lunch with him one day, saying how wonderful it was working in television and that he'd like it very much, and him saying 'Well, I don't know'. I found it amusing that he's now doing a science-fiction television series. He used to think things like DOCTOR WHO were not that interesting back then. I think he liked it as a programme though.

Tom Baker takes his new in-laws - the Viscount and Lady Bangor - to lunch on 11th January 1981

I remember being particularly frightened of Patrick when we went for the HAMLET read-through because, before we started, a television programme on the Royal Shakespeare Company and how to read sonnets had just been shown, and Patrick was one of the main people in it. I'd never done Shakespeare except at drama school and when they told me of the distinguished cast I thought 'Oh my goodness!' It went on forever, about four-and-a-half hours because it's a very long play, and at the end I went down in the lift with Patrick and he said 'Thank God that's over'. I said it was one of the worst days of my life and he said, 'Of course, one of the highlights was your songs, when did you learn them?' I was like a pathetic child because this actor I had been so frightened of had said something nice about me! We got on very well.

Tell us something about your books.

I've done two on knitting and one on embroidery design. All the things I do feature animals (and birds) including the knitting and sewing books, and I illustrate other people's books too; I've done two for Lance Percival and one for a veterinary surgeon. So that keeps one going, and sometimes takes over.

Have you any unfulfilled ambitions?

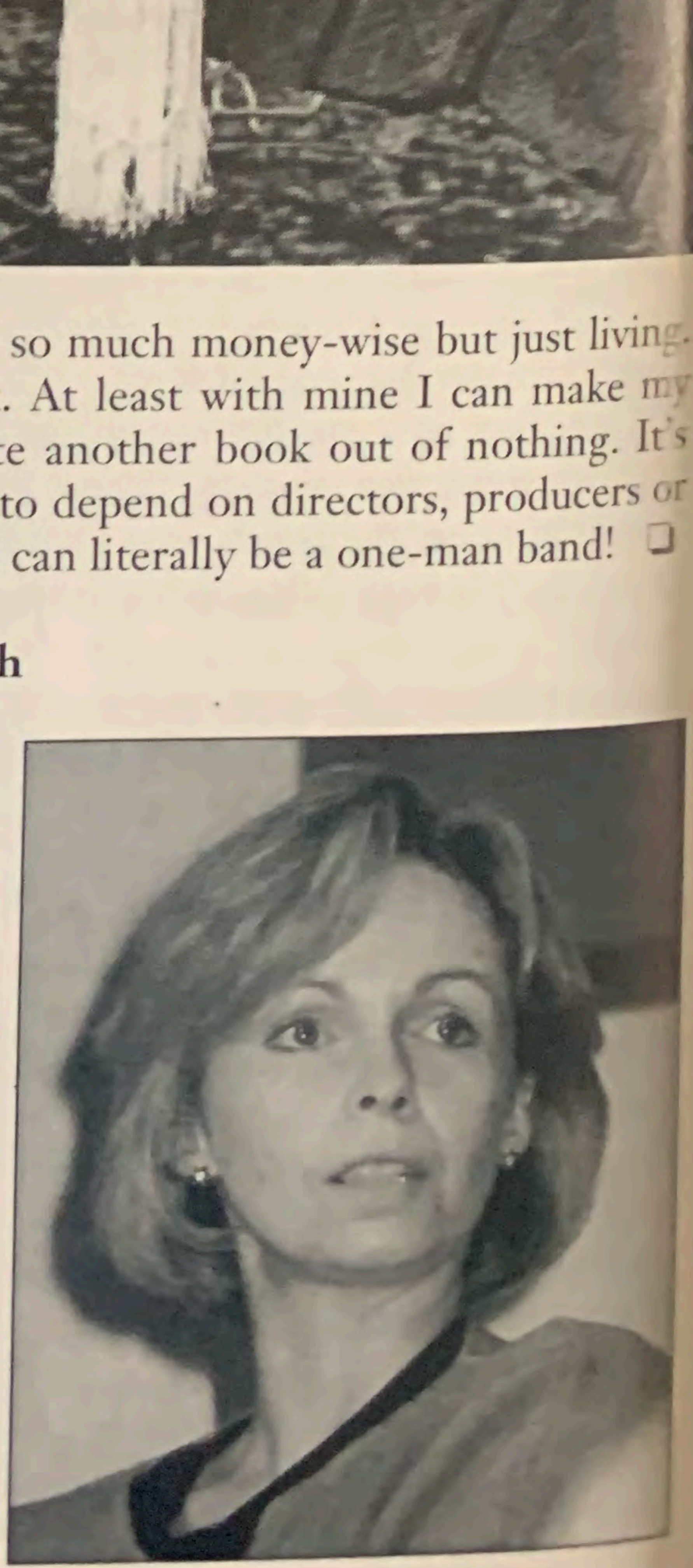
Just to keep working. I never sit around thinking of parts I want to play; it seems to me to be a destructive thing to do because you never get them.

It's good for actors nowadays to have a second string to their bow.

It's fairly essential, really, not so much money-wise but just living. It's difficult waiting for work. At least with mine I can make my own work happen; I can write another book out of nothing. It's quite nice as well not to have to depend on directors, producers or other actors - with my books I can literally be a one-man band! ❑

● **Interviewed by Gary Leigh**

● **Postscript:** *Lalla has taken a break from acting to write and illustrate a couple of books; '101 Things a Cat Would Ask His Vet If He Could Talk', and a canine version along a similar theme. In 1992 she married eminent biologist Dr. Richard Dawkins - author of The Selfish Gene and The Blind Watchmaker - and moved to Oxford. In 1993 she appeared in the charity fundraiser Dimensions in Time, but concedes, 'I didn't understand a word of it!'*



1981

the masters

1989

Anthony Ainley

YOU DON'T seem to go to a lot of conventions these days.

Even a dragon knows better than to appear too often. I like them very much. The only time I ever worked with Patrick (*Troughton*) was at conventions. On *The Five Doctors* (*1983*) we had very little to do with each other, but I loved working with him and I think you'll find, if you take a rough poll, that he's probably the actor's Doctor, and probably the actor's actor too. He was a most popular chap.

I was with him when he died in Georgia, USA. That was very sad. I had the privilege of dining with him the night before he died, and in the morning I was told he was dead. I had to make that statement to the people - thousands of Americans who were very upset - and I found the words stuck in my throat. I couldn't say that he would be cremated on Tuesday and his ashes returned to England on the Friday. The whole thing was a nightmare. We had to carry on, and anyway, I knew that Patrick would have wanted us to have fun rather than be too mournful and sad and weeping, though of course we were weeping. This was on Saturday morning, remember. We had two more days to go and somehow, feeling his spirit with us, we managed to maintain what we always have at Doctor Who conventions; a great deal of fellowship and goodwill and fun, in spite of his death. But it certainly was a dreadful thing.

"Compelling and Elegant..
Praise to Anna Massey
Anthony Quayle
and Coral Browne
fine Performances"
— DAILY MIRROR
THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
GENTLEMAN
A NEW PLAY BY M. BRADLEY-DYNE
AJESTY'S THEAT

Anthony Ainley outside Her Majesty's Theatre in July 1965, where he was to take part in *The Right Honourable Gentelman*

I always felt that of the people who played the Doctor he and Davison were the best actors.

Well, you've certainly named two very successful actors, and what is so nice is that while everybody's upset when x goes, when y comes along they take to him. Who fans are very good that way. When Tom went everyone was upset but they soon took Peter to their bosom, and that is the way Whovians do it. No matter what critics may say about the Eighties Doctors, I keep meeting people in my travels who say they were their favourites. Working with Peter was a joy. He was quiet, very professional, dependable, helpful, without malice and unaffected by trivia which, at times, seemed to abound.

I think he decided to leave because he had genuinely had enough. He was one who wasn't pushed, and his successor who was (Colin Baker) shouldn't have been. In *Trial* he was particularly good. I can't think of anyone doing a better job than Colin. He was terrific, and within a month of it going out he gets the chop. I was a big fan of Colin; he is a real gent, a good friend and a lot of fun to be with, as is Sylvester, who has a way of coming down off the rostrum and down into the audience. He sits with the people, jokes and clowns around, and hugs them. He's a real character. Like Tom he's full of good, creative ideas in rehearsal. I've only done those three episodes with him but I've worked with him at conventions and in cabaret.

Do you think the fans took to you as the Master as well as they have taken to new Doctors?

Roger was a hard act to follow, but it was a great honour to be given his part. I had no idea I would be given so many stories or travel the world and meet all of you, but it's been a wonderful experience. When you start in Doctor Who you really do not know what it means. Normally, if you do an episode of something like Upstairs Downstairs or Crossroads, you go home, the cheque arrives and you forget all about it until the episode comes on and then you forget all about it again. But in Doctor Who you find that your work is scrutinised, analysed, and many years later you see it again at conventions.

When you took on the role was it on the understanding that you would be playing it for a long while?

Simon Williams, Tamara Ustinov, Michelle Dotrice and Anthony Ainley with director Piers Haggard on the set of *The Devil's Touch* at Pinewood Studios, 1970

I was cast simultaneously as the Master and Tremas. It was a three-story, twelve-week contract, the longest contract I have ever signed. I had no idea that there would be further Master stories. I got the part as a result of being in Dickens on BBC1 by Barry Letts, who produced a marvellous adaptation of *Nicholas Nickleby* with a young Nigel Havers back in the Seventies. I played the evil Sir Mulberry Hawk and, I think, though one is never quite sure, that I got into DOCTOR WHO because of this. Barry saw some semblance of wickedness in my character and thought I might be suitable. I'm told there's a facial similarity between me and Roger. I was told I was going to be in that trilogy and I was surprised and delighted. Every show I did I was never told I was going to do any more.

When I was offered the part originally I suggested that a sprinkling of humour might be an idea, to counterbalance what would otherwise be unremitting, one-dimensional evil. I remember being told by JNT that there had been too much comedy recently from Tom and that this idea would not be very desirable. I was asked if I would like to study Roger's tapes and said yes, but the tapes were never forthcoming so I just got on with it as one does, relying on one's own instinct and imagination and the opinions of one's producer and director. The main thing I recall in the way of suggestions from the producer was his call for 'more', 'bigger' and 'louder'. 'More steel' was another of his favourite notes. 'More subtlety' was not something I ever heard, which I found puzzling. After all, the audience is only a yard away or perhaps two, while the mike is even closer than that. Actors, like soldiers, must obey commands. So too, incidentally, must directors.

With Delgado he always had a mask that he could rip off to reveal his true identity, but with you they tended to have a visual effect, like in Castrovalva (1982).

That's true. I never knew how they were going to do it. I leave all that to the technological wizards. I just stood there as the

With director Christopher Barry in the 1977 BBC adaption of *Nicholas Nickleby*

Portreeve and then they said come back in half an hour and stand in exactly the same place as the Master and we'll do the rest. I think they call it 'roll back and mix'.

And in Time-Flight there was all that green slime, for which disguise there didn't seem to be any reason at all within the context of the narrative.

So the critics have said, but we just do what we're told to do. [illegible]s a matter of fact, you might be interested to know that that g[illegible]en slime was not me - it's the only time I've ever had a stand-in. [illegible]as happy that I wasn't doing it because I gather the poor fellow [illegible]ho was doing it for me had a terrible moment when he was appar[illegible]ly feeling that he was about to die. He felt he was going to be [illegible]o-cated. There was panic stations for a while.

The disguises were dropped after a while. Was that a conscious decis[illegible]

I don't know. You'll have to ask Nathan (*Turner*) about that. [illegible]st do what I'm told. I found, actually, that the stories - apart fro[illegible]e *Five Doctors* (*1983*), which I was very pleased to be in as I had a[illegible]e slice of the action and couldn't complain about that - lessen[illegible]n importance for the Master.

Particularly the one Kate O'Mara was in?

Yes, I agree. I was second fiddle to the Rani and the Valeyard[illegible]d that was unsubtly obvious. I had previously been told that I w[illegible]o be given a companion, the excellent Sarah Badel, but as th[illegible]s turned out Kate got the job and there were times when I lo[illegible]d like her companion and not vice versa. The scripts seemed to d[illegible]riorate as far as the Master was concerned as the seasons pas[illegible]l. The excellent Barry Letts was no longer the executive and he [illegible]f course was the creator of my character. Nathan, left to his own devices as producer, seemed more interested in creating his own enemies and this he did, with knobs on.

Acting is full of disappointments but I wasn't too disappointed about that. I'd had a very good run up until then and I was very grateful, always. The BBC had given me lovely work prior to DOCTOR WHO, and then to take on Roger's part I considered a terrific honour. I will always be grateful to Barry Letts for that. I haven't told him so I hope he reads this. The profession could do with more like him.

Did you notice any tension between the producer and his script editors?

I thought I noticed tension between him and Grimwade, yes. Not Saward particularly. Remember, actors are a long way from the heart of the matter and don't really know much of what is going on. JNT did seem to spend a lot of his time fuming about A and not talking to B, but he also seemed to be so secretive that one didn't know the whys and wherefores. Besides, the actors were so busy unlearning lines and learning rewrites that they had little time for gossip, plentiful as it always seemed to be. I always found Saward very affable. Ditto Dicks. As regards the styles of script

The Master sans beard *(Planet of Fire, 1984)*

editors and writers they didn't seem to differ greatly to me because I knew that they were all doing one man's bidding. Holmes, of course, had a unique style with which, unfortunately, I rarely came into contact.

Presumably you must have a certain fondness for the show or you wouldn't have kept returning to it so readily?

I think my fondness for it grew when I realised what it meant to so many very nice, very bright people around the world, and when I learned what a very great demand there is for it. I didn't know what a great privilege it is for actors to be part of it. It has endured so long because of the goodwill of its audiences to whom we all owe so much. There's a great deal of goodwill, good fellowship and great friendship. People even get married through Doctor Who! Science fiction means a great deal to a lot of people and I just wish that the demand was fulfilled. They're certainly ignoring Who, but the recent sales of the videos tell them that there's a huge market for SF and they should give the people what they want.

What else have you done recently?

I was recently asked to go to Lancaster and play Hamlet, but I didn't fancy particularly going up to Lancaster to sweat it out. It's hard work, you know, playing Hamlet, which I did when I was younger, but it's a super part for an actor; some very nice soliloquies - and if you're a touch mad it's a little easier!

Are you a touch mad?

I hope I am a little barmy, yes. I think, as an actor, it helps to be both barmy and childish.

Is Shakespeare something which, as an actor, you feel you ought to do a lot of or is it really no big deal?

Well, there's a big snobbish attitude in this country about the classics. You get great opportunities to win golden opinions because they're good parts in which to demonstrate one's gifts, which one doesn't have in ill-written plays. I think there's no doubt about it that if you go and twinkle at the National or at the Barbican you do yourself a lot of good, whereas if you go and struggle on television you...

Survival, 1989

Fade into obscurity?

You're on your way to rapid obscurity!

There's also a bit of snobbishness about SF. It's a way to earn money while waiting for something more important.

I think you're right, although a lot of the good actors like Richard Briers that have come into the show said it's the first time they've been taken seriously by their children. It was said by Gawn Grainger, who was a very good friend of Lord Olivier's, that it was Larry Olivier's ambition to be in a Doctor Who, which was a lovely thought. I had the pleasure of meeting and working with him briefly, but that was before I went into Who. I'd like to have checked that out with him before he died.

There's an idea that an actor should begin his career by playing Hamlet and end it by playing Lear. Would you play Lear?

Well, it is the natural route, isn't it? You end white-haired and ancient, a dotty monarch. That's a super part too. If you have all the guns, those parts are in most actors' range.

The best Lear I've seen was Clive Swift.

Yes indeed. I've played cricket with Clive Swift. He's a good actor and I'm a fan of his. I should be thinking in terms of tackling the challenging parts, but I've sort of run out of ambitions. I'd rather go and play tennis. Isn't that a terrible admission?

Possibly. Do you think one can learn to act as one can learn to play tennis, or is it a talent that you either have or don't?

It is said that most actors are born performers, but you certainly have to acquire the technique to continue and develop as an actor, but then you need technique in any trade don't you?

Would you say that acting on stage and television require different skills?

The main difference is the stage. You have to present the truth in your voice, but it has to be heard in the upper circle (Pat Troughton called it 'shouting acting'). You can also use facial expressions much more on the stage and more head movements. In TV and film there's no problem about 'drying'. You simply go again and it's more about 'eye' acting. A blink can be a sufficient gesture.

Is acting a catharsis? For you?

An offer comes along and you accept it or you don't. One considers the script, the time, the place, people with whom one is to work. The lolly too is a factor. Sorry to lower the tone of the conversation, but money *is* a factor. If it's not too urgently required one is able to say 'thanks very much, but no thanks' if it doesn't appeal. I have a feeling writing is rather more cathartic than acting. Acting is, after all, about team work, carrying out the author's intentions and carrying out director's instructions, which in Doctor Who more often than not came from the producer.

What do you remember about The Land that Time Forgot?

That was my very first comedy film but I didn't know that at the time I made it!

There was some controversy a couple of years ago about a letter that you wrote turning down an invitation to appear at a local Doctor Who group. Something about 'peanuts and monkeys'...

I wish I could show you the original invitation I got from them. It seemed to be written in a semi-jocular 'send-up' style. I get so many letters that I'm inclined to answer them very quickly, and with this one I decided to be semi-jocular too. Indeed I always go for the light touch if I can. (One of the worries I have about this interview is that I may have been too solemn. I hope not.) So I scribbled off this reply, never thinking it would be read by hundreds and certainly not intending to upset anyone. Indeed I have the highest opinion of the Welsh, especially if they are science-

1982 the writers 1986

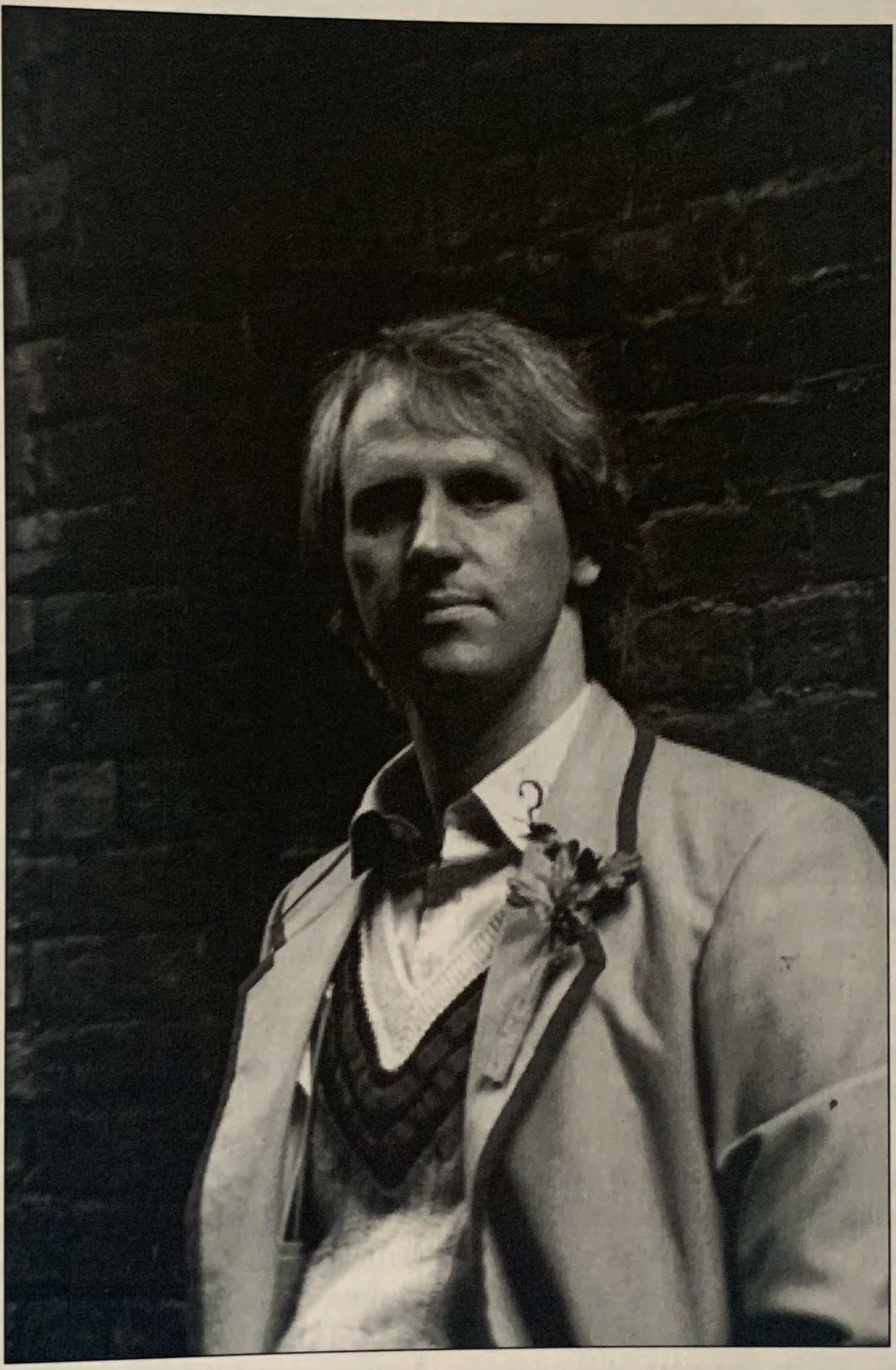
Eric Saward

"We should have written off 50% of what was ultimately transmitted" - August 1988

"BEFORE becoming a freelance writer I trained as a schoolteacher, and before that I had numerous jobs which varied from working as an electrician in a theatre to working in bookshops. Many, many jobs; a cliched writer's background, really.

I started writing in my early twenties. I'd written short stories and a novel but wasn't happy with them, so I decided to try a script, which I sent to the BBC Radio Drama Department. Although the play wasn't accepted, I was encouraged to try again. I wrote another, a thriller called The Fall and Fall of David Moore, which was accepted and produced, and I started contributing more and more material.

One day I had a telephone call from Christopher Bidmead, who was then script editor on Doctor Who. He'd phoned the editor of Saturday Night Theatre to ask if he knew of anybody he thought might be suitable to write a storyline for possible use in the series, and I gather my name - along with several others - was suggested. In April 1980 I wrote what was, basically, *The Visitation* (*1982*), which he liked very much but John Nathan-Turner didn't (for some reason it reminded him of *The Talons of Weng-Chiang*). I then had a phone call from Chris, around October, requesting a scene-breakdown, which is what you usually do with a first-time writer because of the complexities of plot and structure (you want to see that things will pan out properly and how each episode will work). I was commissioned to do this, Chris liked it and, for some reason, John changed his mind, so I was commissioned to write the full script. The idea stemmed from a girlfriend of mine at college who had been studying the second great plague period of 1665 in London, and we were talking generally about the social conditions which had allowed the disease to spread. The Richard Mace character came from three plays I'd written for radio. I liked the character so I decided to include him.



It was just another job to me. I hadn't watched Doctor Who in years. I was living with someone many years ago who had two children and they used to watch Doctor Who, during the period of Hinchcliffe and Robert Holmes; amusing, fairly exciting and good entertainment. I wasn't watching it in the Sixties.

I delivered *The Visitation* script in January 1981. Chris Bidmead had left the previous December and Antony Root had filled in for three months. I saw Antony about the script as it needed to be tightened. I was then paid the second half of the fee and I sat back thinking, 'Oh well, perhaps I'll get asked again one day'. Then one day I had a phone call from John Nathan-Turner, quite out of the blue, asking me if I would come in for a chat. I went in and he asked me whether I'd be interested in script editing Doctor Who for three months while Antony Root was away.

Barry Letts was still executive producer when I joined. His function was to read the scripts and make general comments because John had no experience as a producer. It was a minimal role, it wasn't intrusive. Barry Letts was far too tactful for that.

The only story, as far as I can remember, that hadn't been commissioned at that stage was *Earthshock*. When I joined they were doing the second studio for *Four to Doomsday* and Antony was working on *Kinda*, a script I liked very much. I thought Christopher Bailey was a very good writer and I was sad I couldn't use him more. The director, Peter Grimwade, was arriving in two or three weeks time and I recall the script was still in a bit of a mess (episodes three and four were all over the place). The solid bones were there but it was slow, plodding, over long and there was a great deal to be done. That was my first task. Chris Bidmead had already commissioned most of the season before he left, and John had commissioned *Castrovalva* himself. There was also a story by Christopher Priest (*Sealed Orders*) which was rejected (John and I thought that the script was unsalvageable).

Earthshock came about simply because of the rejected Christopher Priest story. I was supposed to be leaving in July and we had decided the fill-in story was going to be a Cyberman one. I

Three's a crowd: Janet Fielding, Matthew Waterhouse and Sarah Sutton (November 1980)

had quite good memories of them and John invited me to write it. I wanted a very fast-paced story that had thriller elements. I always thought the Cybermen worked well when they're confined in a claustrophobic atmosphere.

I was asked to include the departure of Adric. John and I had discussed this at some length and strangely we came to a joint conclusion that he should be killed off. It was for dramatic impact; it had been quite some time since a companion had died and, because Adric was stubborn, difficult, cocky even, I decided that it wouldn't be a bad idea if he would spend the last part of the story struggling to do something that had already been pre-ordained, and that his action, although heroic, was really for nothing.

I watched some old Cybermen tapes to get a feel about them and remind myself of what they were like. I know the fans have always criticised John and I for bad continuity, but there isn't continuity within the series itself. Other producers, script editors and writers have introduced various things that haven't followed through, in fact things that would be pointless, if not impossible, to alter or correct. I was talking to a group of fans about *Earthshock* once and I was amazed at their knowledge of the show and their relentlessness in wanting to get everything right. I had a limited amount of time and I couldn't sit down and analyse each story with the intensity they had! One fan pointed out some sequence which contradicted something in a 1966 episode - I was gobsmacked! DOCTOR WHO is a series of self-contained stories. The only continuity is the Doctor himself and his companion(s).

I also wanted the Doctor to be more vulnerable. In a way we were still resisting Tom Baker's last couple of seasons where I, personally, think the Doctor had become almost superhuman. With Peter Davison playing the Doctor it was possible to reintroduce this element. Towards the end of the story all the Doctor could do was stand by and watch as the villains of the piece escaped.

It worked well. Peter Grimwade worked very hard on it. Like Graeme Harper he was good at pacing stories, which a lot of directors aren't. Often scripts are under-directed. It saddens me that Peter did so little direction for television after he stopped working on DOCTOR WHO - a great waste of talent.

For some reason Anthony didn't return to the show, so I was asked to stay on. *Four to Doomsday* was almost completed before I arrived so I had nothing to do with it. I'm not certain how clear *Time-Flight* was in Peter's mind but we talked it through. It was cut and rewritten by him and then by me in an attempt to sort things out, but it never was very satisfactory. It was one of those things; we all ran out of time.

THERE WERE too many companions. Trying to write dialogue for four characters, when it should really be two, is murder! If we'd just had Janet and Peter the contrast would have been excellent; critical, curious, tenacious...all the elements that I think make a strong and inciteful companion against a weaker, much more vulnerable Doctor. Tegan was the best companion not because of good writing, but because of Janet Fielding's skill as an actress. Her performances in Christopher Bailey's scripts confirmed that.

For the twentieth season it was John's idea to feature a past element in every story, but it was something I wasn't very interested in. We had the Cybermen in the previous season and that had worked, but personally I wanted us to move on. Looking back it was a fault both John and I fell into. The season and the celebration failed because of wanting to relive history, and this was done, certainly on John's part, to please the fans rather than the general public.

Johnny Byrne came back because *The Keeper of Traken* (*1981*) had worked quite well (although, I now understand, Christopher Bidmead helped it along). It was difficult to get *Arc of Infinity* (*1983*) right - it was a very long and complex script. There aren't very many Gallifrey stories but we did look at those in which it did feature. Again they were not consistent because it was never very clear exactly what went on there. I think it was one of those 'Friday afternoon' inventions that were thought a good idea at the time! Amsterdam came about because John wanted to go and film abroad, and Johnny was told at the commissioning stage. Those foreign location shoots never worked because we could never afford to do them properly. You finished up running around the streets! I can't remember the reason why Tegan was going and then she wasn't going - it was not very well contrived.

This is the sad thing about DOCTOR WHO; very few people have written it well. If you go back over the years you'll find it's the same old names that turn up, and as far as I'm aware most of those old names, including poor old Robert Holmes, are now dead. You can't go back because they're not there anymore. Gerry Davis was interested. I remember meeting him about the possibility of doing a Cyberman story and he produced a storyline that I thought was not very good. Chris Boucher was approached, but that didn't work out either.

I, personally, didn't like *Enlightenment (1983)* very much. I didn't think it was strong enough and the direction again was a bit flat. It had imagination in it but I think that once you'd discovered where you were in time - by the end of episode one - you really had nowhere else to go.

The King's Demons...

I don't like the Master, but John did for some reason. Anthony Ainley did his best with what he had. If he was sending it up it wasn't greatly apparent because it's a very pantomimesque character. If Anthony had played more against the nature of the character it might have worked better. Anthony certainly worked hard and made the best of it he could.

When the final story of the season was cancelled due to a scenery shifter's strike we were all very disappointed, but when you're told you're not doing anything there's nothing you can really say. John, I think, was not displeased because it allowed him to get on with his pantomime.

A publicity shot for *The Five Doctors* (1983)

For *The Five Doctors*, I wanted someone who had a great deal of experience. By this time I'd watched many old tapes and I discovered the Hinchcliffe period, of which Robert Holmes was not only editor, he'd also written some of it. I then saw *The Talons of Weng-Chiang* (1977) which I thought was absolutely wonderful. It was everything I thought DOCTOR WHO should be - funny, exciting, cracking entertainment. I realised that Bob Holmes was by far and away the best but John didn't want Bob and resisted each time I asked for him. I think he frightened him!

I remember when Bob walked into the office. He was a big man, an ex-policeman, and he still had that presence. I think he looked at John and I and thought, 'Crikey, a couple of real jerks here!' He shouldn't have made it so obvious, but we were being silly about what we wanted in the story. John wanted the Cybermen, the Master and all the other bits and pieces that came into it, and Bob said, 'Forget it, the Cybermen don't work very well, and I like creating original characters'. We said we'd commission him to do it but he said he wasn't certain he could make the story work. John was furious that Bob had the audacity to say he wasn't happy in this honest and outspoken way.

Bob went off and wrote fourteen or fifteen pages of the script. I read them and, to be honest, they weren't very good. I don't know what had gone wrong. It was funny but plodding, as if his heart was not really in it. I then approached Terrance Dicks. He was prepared to cope with all these requirements and thrash out the story and he wrote the script but, as I think *The Five Doctors* showed, it was excessive.

John wanted Waris Hussein, who directed the first DOCTOR WHO, back for *The Five Doctors*, but it became apparent that Waris Hussein was not remotely interested. Douglas Camfield was also asked and hadn't said no. I had lunch with him not long before he died and he was still quite bitter about the way he had been treated. He'd shown interest when John took over, but John had been very dismissive about using him. He didn't want the 'old school' back. I think perhaps his original motive may have been honourable in as much as he wanted to inject new blood, but you also use some of the old talent as well; if people are good you don't just throw them to one side. It's a waste of talent, although Douglas Camfield never suffered from lack of work. Peter Moffat I was very fond of and liked as a person very much, but he was unsuited to the work. He had no real sense of the pace that was necessary.

Terrance delivered scripts that were very waffly with no sense of character and not much pace, and a lot of work was done to try to keep the story. It was by no means Terrance's fault, he'd written it very quickly. It was reduced and rewritten in a lot of the scenes, and then there were problems with Tom Baker as to whether he was going to be in it or not. But that was just one of the many, many problems on *The Five Doctors*.

JOHNNY Byrne had said he'd liked *Earthshock* and wanted to do a similar thing himself. I said 'Fine, as long as you can make it different', so he went away and worked hard on the script. I used to tell everyone who came through the door, 'You can have twelve speaking parts, possibly twenty-thirty extras and ten sets, as long as they're not too big'. Johnny used to come back with epic, over long scripts which you'd then have to start hacking away at, rewriting masses while trying to keep the story. Unlike Bob Holmes, who used to give the writers a story and then rewrite it anyway because it didn't work, I would try to be faithful to the original story and try to make it work. That was my mistake. I should have rejected much more readily, which John and I never did. We should have written off 50% of what was ultimately transmitted.

John was reluctant to charge too far ahead with commissioning scripts which is why we didn't write off more than we did, though when it came to rewriting scripts I had total freedom because it didn't cost John anything. When it came to commissioning sometimes I was blocked, other times he did support. I think, in spite of everything, he trusted me on the script side and in his own mind he was happy to leave it at that, but it was always an uphill struggle.

I wasn't happy with the script or the direction for *Warriors of the Deep* (*1984*), but it's not fair to blame the director (he could argue that there wasn't much there to give in the first place!). The head of Visual Effects came into the studios and said, 'The Myrka is not up to our standard', and wanted to pull it. John said, 'You're not telling me what I can have in my programme...' and kept it in. The head of Visual Effects was right - it should have been junked.

The Awakening started as four episodes. I'm very interested in history and old buildings so it appealed to me greatly, the sense of time being stored in inanimate objects like stone. Again Eric

***Ressurection of the Daleks* (1984): Peter Davison and Mark Strickson as Turlough, Maurice Coulborne as Lytton**

Pringle tried very hard but it wasn't working. They were all walking in and out of scenes for no particular reason. It was decided to cut it back to two episodes, the first re-written episode came in and it wasn't much better. That was one story where I can honestly say that, apart from the opening scene when they gallop into the yard, almost everything else was written by me. I personally thought it worked quite well. *Frontios* also worked well. I sometimes found Christopher's stories a bit over-complicated, but I think *Frontios* was probably the most accessible.

The halted Dalek story from the previous season had been lying around for about six months before I looked at it again and updated it. The only alteration was Tegan had to be written out. I watched everything that existed with the Daleks - it was like never-ending torture! There were one or two I liked; *Genesis of the Dalek* (*1975*) I thought worked well. By the time I came to write *Resurrection of the Daleks* I had problems in getting the plot together. I wanted it set on Earth, a villain like Lytton who wasn't going to be caught at the end, and the Victorian warehouses with their lovely atmosphere. But the story never satisfied me, it was never resolved in my mind. I resisted the Daleks (which was a mistake) rather than riding with them as I did in *Revelation of the Daleks* (*1985*), which I thought worked much better. I thought that everyone tried hard, it was fairly well cast, and the direction wasn't bad at all, but I personally never liked it very much. I wrote it and I'm not blaming anybody else but myself!

I certainly didn't intentionally base it on what had gone before. Perhaps it's the fate of watching too much material, that what you've seen you suddenly forget but subconsciously it becomes incorporated into your story and you think it's yours. I've never deliberately copied anybody, I see no point in it. I like to see myself as being an inventive writer and I don't take any pleasure in stealing other peoples' ideas or dialogue or situations; influenced by them and learning from them, yes. One thing I liked about Davros, which is why I brought him back, was you could give him straight dialogue. Two Daleks speaking I found painful - there's no light and shade in them whereas with Davros there is. He is evil, he is ambitious, he is vicious, but he can be funny too. The Daleks' constant, ranting repetition drives me insane and that's why I don't like them, at least I didn't for the first story.

Peter Grimwade, who had been booked to direct it as the climax to the twentieth season, wasn't invited to come back when it was remounted. I can't remember what stage we were at when he wrote *Planet of Fire* (*1984*), but I went on the recce for that one with Fiona Cumming, who directed it. She suggested to John they do a story using Lanzarote's volcanic landscapes, but again, unfortunately, it wasn't used to its best advantage as the writer wasn't allowed to visit the island. John felt you just didn't let writers do things like that. For example when the Singapore story came up John and Gary Downie, the production manager, went there to do a recce but Robert Holmes should have gone because he was the writer.

Mark Strickson was a good actor and he was wasted. To develop the character you require time and space, and if you're fiddling about with two or three companions you just haven't got the time. It's extremely difficult and the companions always suffered most. He was there for over a season and we just never managed to get around to him. I'd love to have given him a stronger story than his exit story, like Janet Fielding had with the two Mara stories, but it just never came about. He got as near as possible to a story of his own in *Planet of Fire*.

All the companions that were booked when I was there were down to John. Peri came in for the sole reason that John thought she'd give DOCTOR WHO more American appeal and he'd be able to make one in America, which he tried but it didn't happen, just as Janet Fielding was brought in before her, to appeal to the Australians.

The Caves of Androzani was certainly an above average script, but I think Graeme Harper had a great deal to do with the impact of the story. I'm not devaluing Bob, but I think his script was lifted by Harper's direction and the whole thing came together. Sharaz Jek was highly melodramatic and theatrical, and in an actor less capable than Christopher Gable it would have been a mess - he could have been screamingly over the top! A lot of the elements in that story, if badly handled, could have come out as an absolute disaster.

Because of the hiccups of the first meeting, I said to Bob, 'This one you can have to do what you want with, and the only thing you've got to write out is the Doctor at the end'. I wanted to give Bob as much freedom as possible without cluttering him up, and he went away and wrote the first two episodes which read well. We had a chat about them and then he went away and did the final two. I did virtually nothing apart from Colin's introduction at the end and the scene about that stupid bit of celery the Doctor wore. We wanted an explanation for it, and I wrote the bit about its restorative powers and so on. It's ironic because that was quoted from one reviewer as being wonderfully classic Bob Holmes lines! I was sitting at my Praxis 35 typewriter thinking, 'What on earth can I call this...I'll call it Praxis!'

For Bob it was very much a routine story. It was a good, above-average script, certainly above average for what I'd been involved in (with the exception of the Christopher Bailey stories). I was so delighted it had worked well, considering the minor hiccup we'd had at our first meeting, and it was a delight to work with someone like that. You had a combination of a good, well-written story directed with flair and energy and a good cast. Now, when you see that happen you get a good end result, and that's what it should have been like more often than not. It was the luck of getting Graeme Harper because he was then untried - he could have been a total disaster but he wasn't.

Peter Davison was easy to work with, he coped with John as well as he could, but he never saw Doctor Who figuring as a major slice of his life. For him Doctor Who was a chance to play a lead. He was a relatively young man of thirty when he joined and had already had success in other series. He said to me he'd thought staying another year would not be of any benefit to him and, as far as I'm aware, he left of his own accord.

I've always hoped that, in retrospect, Peter's three seasons of Doctor Who will be seen for what they were. He certainly grew more confident in playing the part as time went by, but I think from day one - in *Four to Doomsday* - he was giving his best. He never, ever blamed those around him or the scripts or the directors. He was a highly professional and, I think, talented actor who did the best in the situation he was given, and I think he's been grossly over-criticised.

AFTER Peter Davison, the thing was to bring back a bit more of the Doctor's grouchiness. The thought at the time was to make him more alien again, and also a bit like Sherlock Holmes in that he makes these amazing leaps that you don't understand but there is a logic to them. That was never developed very well, unfortunately, but it was our intention to make him tougher, slightly more unpleasant and grouchy. John and I discussed the character together and this was the conclusion.

John said publicly that the reason he booked Colin Baker was because he found him amusing, which to me is like saying the reason I booked so and so is because they've got blue eyes! It's not really relevant to what you want them to do - you don't send for a plumber when you want an electrician. Personally I think Colin was miscast, but that's not Colin's fault. Colin said yes to the part because he wanted it. The miscasting was down to John. He chose, I think, the wrong man, and one can only let his record speak for itself. I think there were far more politics going on than certainly I was aware of. It's not in my nature to be sycophantically flattering. I never crawled to or complimented Colin Baker, in fact we didn't have many conversations. He and I had spoken privately about the show and I was trying to indicate to him how pathetic things had become - that you couldn't talk openly to your leading man for fear of upsetting the producer - and Colin knows that is true.

We introduced Colin at the end of the season simply in an attempt to get the new Doctor established before we went off air. The storyline was Anthony Steven's for the first two and a bit episodes and the rest of it was mine. I did a lot of work on *The Twin Dilemma* (*1984*) and it was done, again, very quickly because I'd let Anthony Steven go on too long to try and make it work.

We were down then to one companion, which I think is the ideal combination, but with Colin and Nicola it didn't work. Nicola Bryant worked hard but I think her part was wasted. The performance became very much a one-level thing; she often whinged when she was supposed to be just unhappy, sad or frightened. You can argue that was because the lines she was given were poor, but I was also lumbered with a character who was weak and feminine in all the worst qualities you can possibly have. Women under adversity are as strong and tough as men, and that's what I would like to have seen.

The change to 45 minute episodes was a challenge. Like anything else, you were told, there was no discussion. Personally it didn't bother me because it gave us a bit more time to develop things. In my opinion the stories were, on the whole, paced properly and filled their 45 minutes. It had advantages. I'd like to have done another season to discover whether it could have worked better.

I rewrote vast chunks of *Attack of the Cybermen* (*1985*) in the same way I rewrote Eric Pringle's and Anthony Steven's. We tried to use Gerry Davis but he'd come up with a storyline that didn't work very well. It was also a deliberate policy of both John and myself of trying to find new people. Going back and using the Cybermen as they were twenty years ago is a waste of time. You've got to move on. I saw no reason why we shoudn't use destructible Cybermen. If they're indestructible how do you then destroy them convincingly?

I didn't want to bring back all these old creatures. I found them tired and tatty. Bringing the Daleks and Cybermen out once every five years was often enough. Personally I felt it was too soon to bring the Cybermen back.

Vengeance on Varos...

I knew of Philip Martin because of his work on Gangsters. Christopher Bidmead tried to use him during his time but he wasn't interested. Philip's first script was a wonderful confusion. It started long before it was made, during Davison's era, as four x 25 minute episodes. There were all sorts of things in it that worked well and there were some that didn't. The television thing was there but instead of having the characters talking like a chorus, which was effective, they sat there mute and there was no comment on what was happening. Sil was Philip's invention and I think he remained much as he was created. I was pleased with Philip's script which shaped up very well, and therefore I had the time to do a real script editor's job (i.e. talk to the writer!). It sharpened up and hardened up and it was looking very good, then we got lumbered with the 45 minute episodes so Philip went away and rewrote it as two x 45 minuters and it changed a bit there, but fundamentally the story stayed the same.

The Two Doctors...

Bob didn't like being told what elements of the show's past to incorporate, neither did he like the idea of setting the story in America, especially when there wasn't enough money to make it properly. John was away somewhere, probably at a US convention, and Sue Anstruther (the production associate) and I had this conversation about St. Louis. She'd done the costings and it was horrendously expensive so it had to be somewhere in Europe, and the first choice was Venice, until it was pointed out that it would be impossible to do this in August. But John was adamant that the story was set abroad.

Bob had already written the original story set in St. Louis and there were quite serious changes to be made (in spite of what John thought, you can't transfer a story from an English-speaking country to a Spanish-speaking country, particularly when you have verbal jokes and play on words and so on). It was quite a major rethink. After discussions Bob went away and reworked the material to be set in Spain. It changed in some respects, not massively; the plot remained but a lot of the lines were altered. By this stage, I think he was getting really fed up and tired and the story ultimately suffered because of all this messing about. It was all so boring and embarrassing and down to lack of thought.

I think, at three x 45 minutes, the script was too long. If we'd forgotten Spain and set it realistically in this country or somewhere where we could have filmed much more extensively, or used proper locations and had a better ending instead of all that silly running around the streets, then yes, it could have been a much better story. It had huge potential. A six-parter is a lot of material and needs a very strong story with a lot going on, and they are few and far between. In principle I think the four-part element was probably better.

Revelation of the Daleks (1985): Alexei Sayle as the DJ

The Mark of the Rani...

I commissioned Pip and Jane Baker for my sins, but that said their first story wasn't that bad and they worked bloody hard on it (what they did afterwards is now legend, but I was not around so I'm not responsible for that). They wanted this female Time Lord and they liked the idea of a historical setting because they weren't very strong on the sci-fi element of adventure story-telling .

Peter Grimwade killed the Master in *Time-Flight*, and I was quite happy to see him dead. The producer then decided he wanted him back so you invent reasons for his resurrection. However hard you try they can never be very satisfactory ones. John was happy to leave him in that particular state at that particular moment, and I wouldn't bother justifying why he came back.

Timelash...

Glen McCoy, who'd done a little bit of work on EASTENDERS, came up with an idea which was sort of half reasonable, but again he couldn't write very well for the medium. He stayed in because, as I said earlier, John was reluctant to reject anything because of the cost involved of commissioning a replacement script, so I did a bit more work on it. What you saw was basically the story with some revision. Fans seem to think that an editor should spend every minute of every day working on scripts to bring them up to a standard, as Bob Holmes, Christopher Bidmead and many of the editors before me have done, but there are times when you can't do it and there you see the raw quality of the material. Glen's wasn't particularly bad compared to some of them, but his script should have been rejected. DOCTOR WHO should have the highest rejection rate in the department as far as I'm concerned because they are very difficult things to write well. The writers tried their best and were paid for their efforts but the scripts should nevertheless not have been made. It seemed to me false and silly economy to go ahead and make a load of rubbish which, at times, we did.

There were a lot of things that weren't working in Colin's first season. It wasn't the fact we had a new Doctor, or that all the scripts were not perfect; it was a great mismatch. DOCTOR WHO's failure over the last eight years has been down to many factors, and I'm not ignoring my responsibility in that period, but I think things would have been much, much better if we'd had more suitable directors.

Revelation of the Daleks...

With my second Dalek story I came to terms with them much better. I wanted to make them work better, and I'd come up with, I thought, a much better idea. I wanted to get away from the *Earthshock*-type of story and very much wanted to get humour into it. I remembered DOCTOR WHO as being amusing as well as exciting and it was that combination I wanted. John, then, was anti-humour because of Graham Williams and Douglas Adams and we were very much straighter, and I think now, with hindsight, it was a mistake; we should have brought back that mix of humour and adventure from the beginning rather than try and go straight. I wanted to mix humour and adventure. I think it worked in *Revelation of the Daleks*.

I also had a much better story. I'd read *The Loved One* by Evelyn Waugh, where Mr. Joyboy makes bodies look beautiful for their burial. It's a wonderful story. I wanted all the hideousness the living often heap on the recently deceased. One of the reasons the DJ was invented was to underline the sheer tat of what they were doing - this grotesque creature playing music and informing the sleeping dead of what they were missing. In a way the DJ was a creature of enormous horror which, in the context of where he works is acceptable, although when we met him later he's in fact quite nice. I was lucky to have Graeme Harper to direct it.

It was more the agent Roger Hancock than Terry Nation who seemed to think the Daleks loom large in everybody's lifestyle. He was very reluctant to give permission for their use and we had a big fight to get them for *Resurrection of the Daleks*. I wrote a storyline for the first Dalek story and it was sent to Terry Nation in America. We didn't hear anything for a very long time, and John spoke to Roger Hancock who hadn't heard anything either. John then said to me, 'Go ahead and write it' (it was literally a week before the director joined!). I then had a phone call from John telling me that Terry Nation, who'd finally read the storyline after having it for months - not days or weeks, but months - didn't like it. We phoned Terry to assure him that we weren't going to send the Daleks up, which concerned him after he had seen *Destiny of the Daleks* (1979).

I DIDN'T understand why we were cancelled. I packed my office bag and was ready to go home thinking I had been sacked. We were told that the DOCTOR WHO scripts were too violent and there wasn't enough humour. Jonathan Powell, the Head of Series and Serials, agreed with this statement. Let me explain the procedure for commissioning a script in Series and Serials:

A script is commissioned by the Production Office (John and me). We both sign the commissioning form which then goes upstairs to the Head of Department (Jonathan Powell) who approves the commission. The script is then delivered by the author, the producer and script editor read it and ask for rewrites if necessary. The finished script is typed up by the script typists, printed, and a copy (i.e. the final version of the script) is then sent back upstairs to Jonathan Powell. His job was to read everything, not just DOCTOR WHO but everything that is to be produced.

The above procedure was followed with every script for DOCTOR WHO. Before we were cancelled we had never had any comment from Jonathan Powell concerning the scripts. Not one word of criticism, not one word of doubt or consideration, nothing at all. We were then cancelled and told we were doing it wrong. My supposition is that it was some kind of political argy bargy going on within the BBC. It must have been.

You can say that we cocked it up but nothing was said till we were cancelled. Powell could have said, 'Look here, the scripts are crap, we don't want them, they're awful, get rid of the script editor, put John Nathan-Turner onto another job, get rid of both of them...', but he didn't! We were then told we were staying on the show!

John never asserted himself, that was the problem. When faced with real authority or a crisis, he rarely had anything to say. He made an appointment to see Michael Grade but didn't learn anything more, other than we were too violent. *Revelation of the Daleks*, the last story I wrote for DOCTOR WHO, had been made and seen and there is some overt violence in that, but nothing came back saying that it was wrong. There was no sense, no rhyme, no reason.

Being cut to 14 episodes was a major criticism. They obviously decided to claw away our money for other productions by taking away half our episodes. It was a major kick in the groin. If they'd come down and been absolutely outraged by what we'd done then

I would have understood that, but no-one had. What the hell did they want - more humour and less violence is hardly much of a move! John was desperately upset for himself, but we were all upset for ourselves. You consider yourself a professional and you don't mind being criticised or told that you're not doing it well, but the way we were treated was insulting, embarrassing and hurtful.

We then had to decide what we were going to do with 14 episodes, and the general conclusion was - which I came up with and which I now regret - the trial sequence. We were on trial ourselves, so why not reflect it in the programme? As I said, when you're not told what you're doing wrong it's very difficult to think where you've gone wrong. It was implied but never explained.

We tried to make it funnier. Bob Holmes wrote the first four episodes which, given the pressures, were okay on paper, but Jonathan Powell didn't like them. The scripts had disappeared for weeks and we thought they had been accepted, the director had even joined. Then we got this memo saying, 'Didn't like this, thought that was too silly...', and all the rest of it, so alterations were made which he accepted and which went into the final programme. Bob Holmes was, like me, absolutely pissed off in the whole way it had gone.

Lynda Bellingham as the Inquisitor *(The Trial of a Time Lord, 1986)*

The season just wasn't working (although Philip Martin's story was fine). I got all the writers together - originally Robert Holmes, Philip Martin, Jack Trevor Story and David Halliwell - to discuss how the trial would logically progress. Jack Trevor Story and David Halliwell's scripts were eventually junked and Pip and Jane Baker were brought back. It was an act of absolute desperation - I simply had no-one else!

The idea of a thriller in space was mine, alas, which they went away and worked on. When I read the first two episodes I just thought it was a total waste of time, and I left not long after.

There was no support. You could never go and talk to John easily or have an open and free conversation with him anyway because, one wrong word said, and he would make it felt that he was displeased, but on this occasion I felt I needed to more than once.

BOB and I had discussed the last two episodes of the trial. We had agreed that we were going to have a negative ending to the season; like Sherlock Holmes and Moriarty going over the Falls, the Doctor and the Master would be locked in mortal combat, and we'd go out with this question mark hanging over the season. John was told and he said, 'Alright, go ahead and write it and see how it works', but it was never written because Bob became ill. He was very run down and had suffered a major blow to his pride from Jonathan Powell asking for rewrites on the first four episodes. It may sound silly that a professional writer's pride could be so easily hurt, but in his time he had edited the best three seasons the show had ever had and written or re-written many of the best scripts. He knew more about what made DOCTOR WHO work than almost anyone. I knew those episodes worked well, Bob knew they worked well.

During my time on DOCTOR WHO I had become friends with Robert Holmes and was greatly distressed by his illness. What with that and the show in such a mess and little or no support from the producer, I felt I had had enough (with hindsight I think I should have taken Peter Davison's example and left after three years).

You'd have had to be there, I suppose, to fully understand what it was like. It was so depressing. John was not unpleasant about it, in fact after I left he said, 'Well, Bob's ill, would you like to write the final episode?' I agreed to write it but on the understanding of what we'd discussed, and I went away and did my version pulling the threads together. To Bob's formula I rewrote half the previous episode which he'd already written, because I couldn't link up exactly with what he'd done (I think the first twelve minutes of episode 13 is his and the rest is mine), and then I wrote the last episode and delivered it. John said, 'Yes, that's alright I suppose', then he turned around and said, 'I can't stand this end, you can't have them going out like this'. It was a definite renege on what had been agreed, so I said, 'Well find someone else to do it then!' Then, I think, he got rather annoyed. It was a terrible mess, a pain in my life that I really hated, and at the end of it all Bob Holmes died. The experience was horrible.

The BBC will always support their own regardless (John was staff whereas I was freelance). What I said to *Starburst* was true but is easily dismissed as being a fit of pique by a departing script editor. I was unimportant in their consideration. He was a producer and they would back him regardless. While I was there he used to get ideas for storylines for other shows together and they were rejected by the likes of Jonathan Powell and David Reid. I assume he stayed on DOCTOR WHO because the Head of Department didn't want him to go anywhere else.

I don't regret my involvement with DOCTOR WHO at all. I enjoyed working with many of the people involved with the show. As for my future, I'd like to write a really good detective story for television or the cinema. I saw a political thriller the other day on Channel 4 called *A Very British Coup* and I would like to write something like that. I think that the thriller is a wonderful genre. You can put so much into it. It can reflect society and life and attitudes in so many interesting ways." ❑

● **Interviewed by Gary Leigh**

● **Postscript:** *Since leaving DOCTOR WHO, Eric has continued freelance writing, and recently returned to DOCTOR WHO when he was invited by BBC Radio Collection to provide the links for the Tom Baker-narrated missing story tapes - The Power of the Daleks and Fury from the Deep. This year sees the long-awaited publication of his two Dalek scripts, Resurrection of the Daleks and Revelation of the Daleks, for Virgin Books.*

1984
the directors
1985

Graeme Harper

"Somebody else would have read Androzani and cast it totally differently" - May 1985

Sharaz Jek's headquarters (*The Caves of Androzani*, 1984)

"THE FIRST THING I did, as an eight-year-old child actor, was the *Pickwick Papers* character - Master Bardell - in the very first drama commercial British television ever made! At sixteen I left drama school and carried on working as an actor, but within two years I realised I really wanted to get into production and be a director.

I wrote to various television companies and eventually became a floor assistant at the BBC (the equivalent of a 'call-boy') in late 1968. I think I got in on my drama school qualifications and the great interest that I had in the theatre, but I had done some stage production work as well. 'O' and 'A'

Graeme Harper (right) on location with Peter Davison (*The Caves of Androzani*, 1984)

Dorka Nieradzik completes Davros' make-up (*Revelation of the Daleks*, 1985)

levels weren't necessary, and I certainly didn't have any.

As a floor assistant you work from a base called 'studio management' within the BBC system, 'hired out' to different programmes to make sure artists arrive on time, attend their make-up calls, collect graphics — anything that's actually required for the studio. Once you're in you keep your eyes and ears open; it gave you a chance to see the area that you wanted to go. John Nathan-Turner did the same and I think he was split. He has a lot of the variety side in him and would have been very successful, I'm sure, in light entertainment/variety areas, but he also had a very strong drama background, whereas I always wanted to come into the drama side of things.

Being a floor assistant enabled you to watch other peoples' jobs - for example how directors worked with actors, how they dealt with technicians and how they ran the programme - so that when you eventually started directing or producing you already knew what's possible and what isn't.

I first met Douglas Camfield as a floor assistant on a programme called After Many a Summer which he directed, in 1968/9. He was far too busy sorting his programme out and I wasn't closely associated enough to get to know him, but I found him a gem. To me, he was *exactly* my impression of what a director was. There was a charisma about him, something very special which everybody liked. In three years as a floor assistant I remember doing a David Maloney Doctor Who, probably a late black and white, but I can't remember which.

From floor assistant the next step up is assistant floor manager, which you have to apply for within internal boards. My first Doctor Who as an AFM was *Colony in Space* (*1971*). It was one of Michael Briant's earliest jobs as a director, and I worked with him a lot as his AFM. He has a tremendous amount of energy, drive and talent, and that was a great swashbuckling story, full of terrific actors. We had twelve stuntmen - Derek Ware and HAVOC as they were called - which doesn't happen too often in the BBC anymore because that kind of work is very complicated and very expensive.

I was AFM again on *Planet of the Spiders* (*1974*) with Barry Letts, which I remember very well. There was a smashing character actor, the late John Dearth, who played Lupton, a lovely actor and a lovely villain. I wouldn't say that Jon was jumping for joy because he was out of it. All the Doctor Whos I've met have said they've all had what they wanted out of it — lots of fun! They've all been very experienced actors and have all brought something new to the character that makes them totally different from each other, but they've obviously remembered something of the past Doctors to keep the line going.

I can remember tuning into the first episode, though I'm afraid Kennedy's assassination was much more important. It left the biggest mark on me, but it wasn't really the most important time in Doctor Who for me. As soon as Patrick was there he was my era for watching Doctor Who. He was a great comedian and a great clown.

I was an AFM for a long time before I became a production manager, and as an AFM I think I worked on just those two. I certainly have no recollection of having worked on *Planet of the Daleks* (*1973*) as I am apparently credited for!

The Seeds of Doom (*1976*) was the first time Douglas Camfield and I actually sat down and got to know and talk to each other. He was a born leader, a very humane kind of person who knew his business very well. He knew the grammar of film-making and television-making and he was good at both. He loved drama and he loved telling stories. Douglas would talk to people and pass on his feelings, and he also knew how to listen to other peoples' ideas and use them if he thought they were good. He wasn't above other people, he had time for *everybody*. If you had a question, it didn't matter how daft you thought it was, he had time to answer it.

As a joke he would offer a pound for someone to solve a problem, that was his fun way of doing it! Douglas was brilliant at bringing everyone together with lots of enthusiasm and making everyone a part of making that film or television programme. He gave a lot of love, care and attention, and so you felt that you were really working well and you worked hard. He had that kind of charisma. I can't think of a technician in the world who's worked with him who didn't like him. They were all very fond of him and respected him.

Graeme Harper (foreground), the uncredited joint director on *Warriors' Gate* (1981)

Sometimes I think, even now when I've got problems, 'How would *Douglas* have handled it?' I try to use the way that he would explain and go for something, and to use his energy and drive to tell stories and to learn how to pace scenes. Douglas was a great technician. He could look at a script and, by the time he'd finished, always got his pacings right and told stories really well. You watched his programmes and they were electrifying, and before you knew where you were an hour had gone by, it was so wondeful! That's what I wanted to 'steal' from him.

I think *The Seeds of Doom*, which was one of the first things I did as a production manager, was based on The Quatermass Experiment. A great, great story, great characters and, again, great actors. I remember the Krynoid as being very good. We had to use CSO to actually superimpose this thing behind a huge house, and I recall it working very well.

Basically the production manager will, if there's filming, find suitable locations on a brief from the director. Having found the locations, he then has to plan and schedule the best way to run and organise it to make everything work, liasing with all the various departments and giving the director space to actually make the programme. Similarly, in the studio he has to schedule and plan the best way of going about making the programme, which might not be in story order. He has to sit down and look at the enormous plan of the studio and the problems involved and work it all out.

That's basically the job — organising, planning and running the show totally from day one to the final day on the show. Once you've actually mastered how to schedule and plan and organise a Doctor Who as a production manager, there are not that many shows that are more complicated and you should be able to handle any television programme.

After *The Seeds of Doom*, I worked on The Testament of Youth with Moira Armstrong, and also with Barry Letts on The Children of the New Forest. By the time I returned, for

Warriors' Gate (*1981*), Tom had developed his inventiveness because he obviously knew the character so well, and anything that was a problem he could solve very quickly. He could understand the director's problems on shots etc. and how it wasn't going to work, and he'd say, 'I've got an idea, can I offer it?', and the director would listen. He was a great technician and could offer the way out of problems very fast.

I thought K9 was fun. No more silly than R2D2 or C3PO in *Star Wars*. I went out to make my two Doctor Whos for family viewing. I don't know if they were too horrific, I hope they weren't, I hope they were treated as stories and told well. Doctor Who was for young people when I started working in production; now I think it really is for family, and in fact could sometimes be for a really serious *adult* audience on late at night.

It's got stronger and cleverer because technology is getting more interesting and actors have learned to understand that technology to see where they fit into that scheme of things. Also it's had different producers, who all have their own style. Barry Letts' era was tremendously innovative because he's a great electronics expert; he took on the technology that was available and used it to the hilt on Doctor Who and encouraged it, and that obviously matured the programme.

I think John's period is very interesting, obviously. I think, with his scripts, he wants to go for an underlying, 'healthy' level of humour for children or young people which they can enjoy, and then there's the kind of slick satire, or comedy stuff, with its near-to-the-bone dialogue for the older viewers. It's like a pantomime — you've got something for the children and something for the adults — so everyone can enjoy Doctor Who without being too horrified and terrified and switching off.

> *"I thought The Caves of Androzani was brilliant! It had a lot of action, good characters and a good story to offer a good class of actor. I mean, it was so good. It all came off the page so easily and I was very excited about doing it."*

IT WASN'T until after *Warriors' Gate* that I did the Director's Course at the BBC. My first work as a director at the BBC (I'm now freelance) was on Angels, and when I'd made about six episodes I showed John a cassette of a couple of them. We talked and he said he would offer me work but he wasn't sure exactly when, and a few months later he rang me up and said, 'Are you free this particular group of dates?', and that happened to be for *The Caves of Androzani* (*1984*). Obviously I think he was quite interested beforehand, but all producers want time to see what sort of style you have and whether your style will fit in with their's. I was desperate to get hold of all the cassettes in order to look at how past Doctor Whos were handled and all the regenerations that have happened so as *not* to do the same thing.

I thought *The Caves of Androzani* was brilliant! It had a lot of action, good characters and a good story to offer a good class of actor. I mean, it was *so* good. It all came off the page so easily and I was very excited about doing it. I felt the same way when I read the Dalek story, so I was very lucky — I got two stories that I could tell I would enjoy doing. Most of the time when you read scripts, a director immediately has his own individual ideas for characters. For example, somebody else would have read *Androzani* and cast it totally differently. I read the script and saw, right away, three or four actors that would be able to play each of those parts; mainly ones I thought I'd love to work with and who would be smashing for the part.

You generally write down four or five names for each character, then you check them all out individually to see if they are available, and those that are you send the script and see if they like it. I think I got very lucky with *Androzani* in that each of the people I approached liked the script enough to say yes straight away! I knew Christopher Gable in a small way for a long, long time before. When I first joined as a callboy I did a show that he was in for a few weeks in Bristol (this was just as he was becoming an actor and stopping ballet full time), so years later I was able to ring up his agent and have a natter and say there was a part in Doctor Who I thought he might be suitable for, would he consider doing it?

Originally I thought he might be good for Salateen, and when he came in to meet me I hadn't got Sharaz Jek cast at that stage. I'd always seen Sharaz Jek as very elegant, not a Zulu Warrior, but in that sort of style — his body and his voice were the things that were going to tell his story. When Chris came in and sat down I said to him, 'Would you read Salateen, but just have a look at Sharaz Jek anyway'. He went away and his agent rang back and said, 'He'll be very pleased to do either part, but he'd *love* to play Sharaz Jek' (I wanted Robert Glennister for Salateen anyway!). Originally I did have someone else in mind for Sharaz Jek (*David Bowie*).

I think the saddest part about the special effects was the monster, because they'd made a brilliant monster which wasn't going to be seen very much (it was almost a teaser because it was referred to and we saw it occasionally). I didn't have enough experience then to know how to shoot economically and make full use of that monster in the time allocated. Also, its scenes were always last thing at night before we had to wrap and they were always crammed in the last fifteen minutes or so. In order to get the complete effect of horror from the monster, which had wonderful moving parts operated by remote control - eyes, talons, fangs etc. - I needed a little bit more time. I had to cut my cloth suddenly and reshoot in a totally different way in order to 'grab' to get it done in time, and I grabbed in the wrong way. Otherwise it would have been tremendous.

Mixing is very difficult and you've got to know when to do it. It's novel on Doctor Who because Doctor Who needs to be cut, not within the scenes, but from scene to scene quite fast. You're telling a story and you want to tell it well and make it interesting, not slow and boring. I wanted to do the first scene with Sharaz Jek where you see just parts of his body moving around as he goes right the way through his hideout doing this and that and his voice talking. I said to John, 'I would like to do this sequence as one big hand-held shot and mix it, and he said, 'It's not a style we use a lot on Doctor Who because it tends to slow things down, but if you really believe in it, offer it and see what happens'. And that's what happened. We could have had a two-minute shot of him wandering around, but to me that's boring. Mixing it actually makes it work. Editing that whole sequence to select the moments we wanted probably took us an hour-and-a-half to do. If we were doing that on film it would be expensive because then you're doing opticals in the laboratory, but electronic editing doesn't take that long.

I discussed the regeneration scene with John, and explained that I had an idea along the lines of *The Day in the Life Of* by the Beatles where the orchestra goes bananas at the end of the album and ends in a loud, weird chord on a piano and fades away. I had in mind the faces going in a circle around the face of the dying Doctor, who were in his brain but we could see them, with music and a cacophony of sounds of their voices getting muddled up. The whole thing would be a huge, spinning catherine wheel of colour with the Doctor's body slowly splitting, like the opening titles with the stars bursting from the centre out, eventually exploding into the new Doctor. It didn't quite come off because we needed a bit more time in the Electronic Effects Workshop to do it properly.

I WASN'T totally pleased with *Androzani*. Now, I think, I would handle it in a different way. I don't think you ever come away saying 'Yes, I've made the best one'. I would like *Revelation of the Daleks* (*1985*) to have been a bit faster and a bit more action. It had a larger cast and, obviously, a different story totally so you cast it totally differently, but there were some good people. A very, very fine company of actors. I think the DJ was there to be the narrator and to lighten the load as it were. I don't know where Eric got the character idea from but it reminded me a little of the guy in *Dark Star*, the Carpenter film. It wasn't written for anybody particularly. John and I went through groups of people we thought were right and Alexei Sayle was one of them.

It's probably my fault the music was similar in both stories because I asked Roger Limb to do snake rattles for Jobel (because that's exactly what he was - a rattlesnake!), and in *Androzani* you had it for Sharaz Jek. Also, the way *Revelation of the Daleks* was written it started off in virtually the same way as *Androzani*, the only difference being I tried to make it lush. In fact it snowed, so it was even more lush than I expected!

There were bonuses out of the snow, certainly, but we also had some fabulous locations we couldn't reach because of it. The scene where the Dalek gets blown up by Orcini and Bostock, for example, was originally set in a valley which we couldn't get to. Originally there were going to be two Daleks hovering above Orcini and Bostock, who had been clambering up a 1000-yard hill. They would have their gun battle, roll about and hide behind bushes, and eventually one Dalek would take off and the other one would be hit, then thrown twenty feet in the air and fly — actually be seen to tumble in the air — down 1000 yards of space, and explode. That would have been traumatic!

I know Raymond Cusick very well but I didn't talked to him about the new white and glass Daleks. They were created by John Brace, the visual effects designer. I watched two old Dalek stories to get the continuity right and John reminded us of certain things, but I don't think we stuck very close to them, not because I didn't want to but it's now 1985 and we just went slightly further.

I quite liked the idea that Davros seemed to be in charge but was never quite in charge. We never originally thought of having him hovering above, but the whole point of the new white ones was to show the Daleks can hover, to break the thing about how do they come down staircases? When I was rehearsing that particular scene it was Terry Molloy who said to me, from the top of those stairs, 'Why don't you make Davros hover above Orcini?' I thought what a brilliant idea - if he can do it, so can the Daleks! We also had the monster-sized one hovering above Natasha and Grigory. What I really wanted was for it to be ginormous — fifteen, twenty, thirty feet high — but it would have taken a lot of time to organise.

The building of Tranquil Repose was the IBM down in Portsmouth, but the pyramids at the back were painted in in post-production and then electronically fed into the picture. Originally

(Left) The mutant; (Above) Davros' inner sanctum (*Revelation of the Daleks*, 1985)

I wanted that statue to come right onto the camera - as if the camera was the Doctor - and the whiteness of the face to black up. If you remember, the statue split in three parts — the top section, the middle of the face and the bottom — so as it tumbled on film it actually caved in towards the camera as opposed to just a mass hitting. When I saw the shot I said to the editor, 'It's sad it does that because it takes away the drama of that solid mass breaking up', and he said, 'Well, I can offer you this electronic 'whiting out' effect which continues the whiteness of the stone as opposed to blacking out'. So we bleached out the picture electronically, fading it to white as it actually hit the camera, and it was more dramatic.

I don't think the Stengos/Glass Dalek scene was horrific because we were always looking at it from Natasha and Grigory's point of view. If Stengos was on his own in that room wailing away then I think that's something else altogether, but because you've got two normal people in there that should take away the curse of the real gruesomeness. Seeing it at DWASocial5 on a big screen, I thought, 'God, how powerful'. I was pleased, especially to see so clearly that I'd achieved what I wanted in one area; 'drifting in' from a wide shot of Stengos so slowly that you hardly notice, cutting backwards and forwards to close-ups of Natasha and Grigory, and by the time you reach the end of the scene you're in a close-up and then it blows. That worked very well and the music matched it equally so. I regret not using the Glass Dalek as the one which killed Natasha and Grigory. Afterwards I thought, 'Why didn't I take an oblique shot of it and use that as the monster?', but I didn't, so tough! The make-up for Stengos was prosthetics which Dorka Nieradzik made from latex.

Artwork by Phil Bevan

I'D LIKE TO have done more Doctor Who, but I'm glad I didn't because they are very, very difficult - if you go from one Doctor Who straight on to another it uses so much of your energy and ideas. Of course there are people who can sustain the ideas, but I don't think I could.

I would love to direct action really well, to hold an audience with a good, exciting thriller. I also want to do love stories, indepth drama, some comedy stuff...there's no one thing I would specifically like to do, but I like to make things move and keep an audience's attention.

I don't know whether I could ever write anything myself, but if I did I certainly wouldn't be able to direct my own work. That would be dreadful. No, it's much better to take someone else's ideas and try, if you can, to take them even further than the writer ever thought.

I'm always travelling at 3000 miles an hour! If you've a lot of energy you can pass on and people can take it, it's smashing, but just because you've got all that energy doesn't mean that you're going to be a great director or make great productions. Sometimes it can go wrong. You have to know, before you go in to the studio, how to pace yourself so that you know where to lay your energies, because if you get the pacing wrong, when you go to editing it's too late to change it and you have to live with it.

If you take a long time over each scene and be too pedantic and extreme you will lose time, and by losing time you then lose the chance to make the really powerful scenes - the ones that are complicated and need the pacing and time given to them - work. You've got to know when something is *really* good and doesn't require any more, and you then move on and spend more time on the bigger and more important scenes in terms of actors and developing their roles. It's the same for District Nurse as it is for Doctor Who, but in Doctor Who you have also got to allow space for the effects people to give you what you want. District Nurse doesn't require that so much but it's just as traumatic making it

Once the director's got hold of his script, understands it and knows where the writer and producer want it to go, then he will cast it, shoot it and hopefully make it as interesting and lively to the audience as possible. It is the most exciting job in television." ❑

● **Interviewed by Gary Leigh and David Miller**

● **Postscript:** *Since 1985, Graeme has become one of the most prolific and experienced directors in Britain, turning his hand to productions as diverse as the BBC's period drama House of Elliot to the latex lampoonery of ITV's Spitting Image. He has also directed two award-winning seasons of The New Statesman. In 1992 he joined forces with Adrian Rigelsford and Dark Light Productions amid top secret plans to return Doctor Who to the small screen for its 30th anniversary with the 96-minute special The Dark Dimension. To have been shot entirely on film in the summer of 1993 for transmission in November, it was to have realised Harper's ambition of directing the equivalent of a full-length feature film for television on a fraction of the budget. With pre-production work well advanced, the sabotaging of the project greatly upset Harper - recognised as one of the finest directors to have ever worked on Doctor Who - but it is a tribute to his enthusiasm for the series that he is still as keen as ever to be involved with a new-wave of the series, as and when that might occur... Graeme is currently collaborating with Adrian Riglesford on the production of a book - to include storyboards and production designs - revealing their full behind-the-scenes account of the machinations that engulfed the aborted project.*

1984

the doctors

1986

Colin Baker

"I am the Doctor!" - December 1984

"I WAS BORN, at an early age, in London. When I was two years old I was taken, kicking and screaming, by my parents up to Manchester where I lived for 21 years. I trained in law for five years to become a solicitor, during which time I was much more interested in acting. I joined amateur dramatics societies, applied to various drama schools and ended up joining the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts (LAMDA), which I left in 1961. Thereafter I pursued a lustrous career in theatre for a couple of years.

My first job was a three-week tour, it should have been longer but it wasn't very good, so it wasn't! After about two or three years of rep, I got my first television; a series called Roads to Freedom in which I played a rapist! My next job was another Classic serial called Cousin Bet, in which I played a sensitive young poet, and so I got stuck with all these mean and moody characters. Then I did about 100 one-offs in various series, and The Brothers as well for the best part of three years. When that finished I didn't do any television for about five years because that seemed to put the seal on my career, so I did a lot of touring around in thrillers and comedies. I always find 'typecast' an irritating sort of word because it implies you become typecast to a thing. It isn't. All typecasting is is that producers and directors don't have the imagination to realize you're actually an actor, and because you happen to be good in a particular part they say, 'Well that's all you can play', which is rubbish!

I then did a smallish television part in *Arc of Infinity (1983)* as Maxil. Not being one to allow any part to be small, I attempted to make it larger, not by extending the dialogue but by presenting a character that is larger than life, which meant that I attracted the notice of the producer who told me to stop being quite so loud! I subsequently met John Nathan-Turner at a wedding of a mutual friend and we got on quite well.

He says he spotted something in me on that day which he thought would be ideal for the next Doctor - a sort of showing-off, basically. I was *very* surprised. I got a phone-call asking me to come and see him. I didn't even know Peter was leaving so it never occurred to me that's what he wanted. The director of *Arc of Infinity*, Ron Jones, claims it was him who had the idea, his assistant claimed it was her idea and the assistant floor manager claimed it was her idea, but basically the conversation went, 'What about Colin Baker for the part?' 'No, he's a shit, don't want him!' 'No, but he's not like that really'. 'Yeah, alright, let's see him'...and it was offered to me!

At the end of several sessions talking about it, we agreed on the way it should be played. I don't think I've had anything laid on me that I didn't want and I don't think they have either. You can't pitch yourself into something that's uncomfortable. You have to use your own personality enormously to play this part.

Attack of the Cybermen **(1985)**

I got books out of the library on costume and my first idea was, basically, the Master's costume - all in black and quite severe. And then John said, 'What about something that's just totally bad taste - he doesn't give a damn, just grabs the first thing and puts it on?' Actually, after about five or six attempts at designing different things, it worked and now I'm very fond of it. I would miss it severely if it was taken away from me. It does grow on you (the cat on the lapel was my input!).

I was only slightly involved in *The Caves of Androzani* (*1984*). I just turned up on the studio day and recorded it. I think Peter was sad that he was going because the WHO thing becomes very much a part of you, but I think it's a decision that he made which was right for himself - he'd given himself three years and he'd done three years - but he tells me now that sometimes he thinks, 'Oh dear, I wish I hadn't gone because I enjoyed it so much'.

I'm sure he did exactly what was right for his character and his scripts. I'm certainly aiming towards being more eccentric, I don't mean more than Peter, but more eccentric than perhaps I am in the scripts, but that's just the way I see the part. Peter had to follow Tom Baker and Tom had put a lot of humour and eccentricity into it, and I think it was a policy decision by both Peter and the programme that you don't follow somebody as strong as Tom was by doing the same thing.

After my first recording on *The Caves of Androzani* I went home, got out of my car, opened my front door, walked in to my wife, who was sitting watching television, and I stood there and said, '*I am the Doctor*'. She looked at me and said, 'Oh yes? Could you take the rubbish out please?', and that sort of sums it up really! I was doing it as a joke. I don't take the character home with me, and with the three months in between the series I will doubtless do other things if they are offered to me.

The Twin Dilemma took forever! As a result of the strike, instead of having ten days rehearsal we had about three weeks which meant we had tons of time for it. I'm too close to it to be able to judge it. I really have no yardstick to judge it against, it's not even in the context of the season I've done. I saw the logic behind me ending the season, because usually you get a transmodification and then you have to wait a year. I would always find that rather frustrating so I think it was quite nice. It also helps Peter; at least everyone knows he has finished so he can logically go on and do something else.

I WOULD BE very disappointed if I didn't meet the Cybermen, the Daleks and the Sontarans, etc. On the other hand, I think the programme would stagnate if it didn't bring in, occasionally, new opponents. The Rani, played by Kate O'Mara, is brilliant, and Sil is incredible. I'll have to finish the season before I can name a favourite because I have no idea what the Dalek one will be like. What I find extraordinary is that I did the Cybermen one and I thought 'Right, nothing's going to beat that, that was a real cracker', and then along comes *Vengeance on Varos* (*1985*) which, because it's got no enemies I've heard of before, I thought 'Pah' and suddenly that was phenomenal (I heard Michael Grade liked that too!). And then we did *The Two Doctors* and I thought 'That's it, that's the favourite, working with Patrick and out in Spain and Sontarans and the wonderful Jacqueline Pearce', and then we did *The Mark of the Rani*... So, I mean, they're *all* brilliant this season, and now this one (*Timelash*). I think it is going to be a season where you're going to have difficulty in choosing your favourite!

DOCTOR WHO is a programme I always watched when I could. The show's success is a combination of many things: chance, the fact that it happened at the right time; it's got ingredients like the old-fashioned heroism, a touch of the King Arthurs, Biggles...it's very much a part of modern mythology. It's very English as well, but I think the one thing that would kill it stone dead is if it tried to compete with *Star Wars* and high-tech space sci-fi stuff. I think it would benefit enormously from having a bit more money because it means some corners which are cut, quite disastrously at times, wouldn't have to be, but I don't think it needs the same kind of budget that STAR TREK could have. I don't know what the figures are but the budget for an entire season of DOCTOR WHO wouldn't pay for the first ten minutes of a STAR TREK film. It's extraordinary. Now it's been going on for 21 years it's going to last forever, obviously.

I remember most of the Hartnells and Troughtons, thereafter I was working in the theatre so I didn't get much chance to see them. I saw a little of Pertwee, one or two Bakers, and, by chance, I saw a fair few of Peter Davisons. I suppose, as a result of doing one, I made a bit more effort to watch it. *The Celestial Toymaker* I liked way back, and *The Talons of Weng-Chiang* and the Autons one with the telephone line threatening people. Yes, I like the idea of being leapt at by Mary Whitehouse (I love violence, not half - decapitation, blood flowing...!). In answer to who was my favourite Doctor, there's two answers to that — all of me or Colin Baker! I don't have a favourite Doctor. Each has contributed something fairly unique to the part and it has become the sum total of all those parts, so it's like saying 'Which is your favourite limb — your left arm, your right arm or your left leg or your right leg?' I mean, it's daft, it wouldn't be the same without any of them.

To ask which one I'd enjoyed having played is a different question. I should think, probably, Patrick Troughton's Doctor, because I see myself more as an actor than a performer, and as an actor that is an interesting part. I've known Patrick for many years. I shared a flat with his son, David Troughton, when he did *The Curse of Peladon*, because I remember he came back one night and said would I like to go and see a musical with him and Katy Manning, so we went to see *Godspell* together (Katy's wonderful, I've done a couple of plays with her and I know her quite well). When David subsequently got married I was his best man, and obviously I met Patrick at the wedding and I've seen him off and on since. It was wonderful to work together. We were both a bit badly behaved and played jokes on each other, and Frazer was wonderful as well. I still miss them!

There's a lot of joking that goes on between the Doctors. For example, Patrick Troughton and I take the pee out of each other unmercifully — I call him a geriatric and he calls me a fatty and we sort of pass the time like that! At this last convention (*TARDIS21*) we all cracked jokes about Tom (who wasn't there), and the hard-core Tom fans took it seriously. It does have to be said it was a *joke*!

There are one or two mannerisms which I incorporate quite deliberately, occasionally, as a little indication that there is a connection between myself and my previous incarnations. Rather than specify them, I think it's more fun for people to pick it out themselves. There's one that I do, at least once a story, which is of Hartnell. Peter's more difficult. There isn't anything sort of positive of Peter, apart from being attractive, charming and delightful! It's more of a feeling than an idiosyncrasy that I've tried to get in.

I think the more regenerations there are the easier it is for every actor. I think the hardest of the lot must have been Patrick Troughton because they'd had William Hartnell for three years and the idea of the same part being played by somebody else had never occured to anybody. I think, probably, it was hard for Peter as well because there was a whole generation that had only seen Tom, who had done it for seven years. People that watch now, I think, have got used to the idea of change because they hadn't had Peter that long, so in that sense he probably made it easier for people to accept me.

The way I feel at the moment, I'm enjoying it so much I can't foresee myself wishing to leave it abruptly. I had this little temptation to wish to beat the previous record of seven years. I certainly might be around for the 25th anniversary, I think that will be fun, and who knows, if they make a film I would like to be around for that as well.

I'm not an actor who thinks 'I mustn't be typecast'. The moment you do one episode as the Doctor you're typecast, so you might as well do ten years as do three..." ❑

● **Interviewed by Gary Leigh and David Miller**

"I had this little temptation to wish to beat the previous record of seven years. I certainly might be around for the 25th anniversary, I think that will be fun, and who knows, if they make a film I would like to be around for that as well"

"The possibility of it going will mean the viewers will flock to their TV sets in their millions to watch the new season" - August 1986

"THE CANCELLATION was very disappointing. I'm in a difficult position because I arguably have the most to lose if the programme is axed. You might find something else to enjoy and write a magazine about that, but not only is the Doctor a part I enjoy playing enormously, it's also my livelihood. I have a wife and child and a mortgage, so in that respect any kind of dispassionate observation I make of it is bound to be suspect so I am quite careful about what I say. Also, the people who make these decisions are my employers, and I would be foolhardy to openly criticise people who are employing me.

I do understand that the attitude to violence on television is an area where the BBC has to reflect public taste. I happen to believe that the programme we were opposite last year — THE A-TEAM — is a much more violent programme than ours, and it's dishonest violence because it shows people letting off bombs and firing machine guns and yet nobody ever gets hurt. I think that's much more corrupting than anything DOCTOR WHO has ever been. Some of the best DOCTOR WHO stories I have ever seen are the most frightening ones. *The Talons of Weng-Chiang* was a superb DOCTOR WHO story, and the terror that invoked was considerable.

During rehearsing *Revelation of the Daleks* one or two people said, 'Isn't this getting a bit iffy?' I think both Eric and Graeme — and Graeme Harper is a super director who I respect enormously — wanted the knifing of Kara done that way. Everyone mentions the hanging scene in *Vengeance on Varos*, but you must respect people's decisions. When you're actually doing something like that it's very hard to imagine it being seen 'cold', because when we do it we have a lot of fun. We rehearse it, think, 'Hey, great, this is really exciting, I'm about to be hanged'... I can see, in retrospect, that some people might not like that, and in that respect I suppose the violence has been toned down, but I think you could go back over 23 years and find things every bit as violent, but the public attitude towards violence does change and we have to reflect it. On this occasion maybe we were a little behind the swing of the pendulum.

The thing that disappointed me most about the cancellation was that it was reduced to fourteen episodes. Do I argue the decision? No, I don't, because it's not my job to make those decisions, and I've seen enough of the other decisions that Michael Grade has made to realise he is actually a very skilful Director of Programmes. He's very high profile - 80% of the British public know who runs BBC1 - and arguably that's very good for the BBC. In the same way John Nathan-Turner is very good for the programme. They have a similar style of high personal profile presentation of their package.

I believe that John, by his presentation of the programme, has done an awful lot for DOCTOR WHO, despite what anyone else may say, in the same way that Grade is doing for BBC1 by bringing it into direct competition with ITV. Now, we might argue that maybe the BBC should not be considered as direct competition with ITV; maybe we should not worry about viewing figures; maybe public broadcasting should simply be that — public broadcasting without ratings wars. But while we do have ratings wars, I think we need somebody like Michael Grade to run it. If I say that, I cannot then say he was wrong about DOCTOR WHO, although personally I may think that he is.

I would say that there is much less incentive for a Director of Programmes to continue a programme that has been started by his predecessors, however successfully, than there is in making his mark in the job by bringing in his own programmes. If you view a particular programme, however long-running, with disfavour, then you have been put into a job to make those kind of decisions. If he chooses to axe it, it's irrelevant what you or I might think about it. I have to be honest and say that were I a viewer I would be almost as worried, out of nostalgia and so many other things, about its possible demise as I am as a professional actor who needs it for my livelihood, so I'm not just being selfish. I think it would be a very sad day if DOCTOR WHO went. It may well work that the possibility of it going will mean the viewers will flock to their TV sets in their millions to watch the new season.

The one issue where I would take Michael Grade to task — were he interested in my opinion — would be on the viewing figures. He said they were disappointing. I think between seven and nine million, which is what we got, is actually very good. I'm very surprised that nobody has ever pointed out that every single programme he's put on at 5:20 since has got *less*! That's the one thing that I think has weakened his argument. I think our figures were very healthy. Peter's last season averaged about the same as mine.

Grade's seen the first episode of *The Mysterious Planet* to my knowledge, which I think is smashing. I watched it with two or three of the actors who were in later episodes and they were all saying, 'My God, you're quids in for your future now!' I do have to say the opening sequence is not really Doctor Who. It is, in a sense, more the hi-tech stuff, but a lot of people say that Doctor Who is being made now, in 1986, not 1963, and therefore if that sort of stuff is available it should be used. It's damned expensive though. The budget on Doctor Who is not something I am privy to, but I do know that in any television programme a budget is set the first year it is made. The following year you go back and you fight for a 10% increase. Doctor Who - having been on for 23 years - has had a little tiny increase year by year. A new programme like Star Cops will come in with a budget greater to a factor of five and everyone will then say the technique in Star Cops is far better than in Doctor Who. The Tripods is a good example; the money they had available there, and yet I thought it was frankly very disappointing because they spent it all on that bloody great Tripod! If Doctor Who could have that kind of money and the same people who are making it now, it would transform it. All the time they are having to worry about cuttlng costs; designers being told, 'Sorry, we are going to have to scrap that set design, wonderful though it is, because we just can't afford it'.

I thought the *Trial* scripts were excellent when I got them, but last year I thought the scripts were largely excellent then. There were one or two which were not quite so exciting, but I had nothing to judge them against then. I must be honest in that I wasn't very impressed by *Timelash* when I was doing it and actually I felt the end result was much better than I feared it was going to be, with one or two reservations, but one has got to get more distance from these things. When you've just done a piece of work you feel terribly possessive and I am not particularly good lifting a script off the page.

I am playing the Sixth Doctor this season (23). If they'd wanted a change in portrayal, presumably they would have cast someone else. When I first met John he made it clear that he thought I had a kind of largeness of personal quality which would be suitable for the part, and I said straight away, 'I think I'm very right for it, I know I'll enjoy doing it and I think I can bring a lot to it'. Since the hiatus, no-one has said to me, 'I want you to do this, that or the other that's different', but I've never believed that to be the nature of the brief.

"Eric Saward has done himself and others an enormous disservice by an awful lot of what he said. If Eric had really felt all that, what kind of hypocrite does it make him to have stayed on the programme that long? He implies that it was like that for five years"

An area in which I am prepared to accept, not criticism but discussion, is the costume; a small area where John and I would not see 100% eye to eye about. The idea I had initially was to be clad entirely in black, but 'Ant' does that and does it very well. I thought a sort of black, austere costume and this flamboyant character would be interesting but I can see that's not very eye-catching - when you've got lots of tunnels and corridors you need something that singles out your leading character from the gloom around him. In that respect the costume works very well, but I must confess I've got bored with it now and I would like to change it. However, if they have to buy me a new costume out of the costume budget it makes a bloody huge dent in it.

I KNOW that there is an awful lot of flak that John gets. I have worked on many BBC programmes and not even known *who* the producer was! I gather he was one of the half-dozen people who turned up at the producer's run but never been sure which one it was! If you're playing a small part in a programme, which obviously I was in the past, the producer is not going to introduce himself. John makes it a point to know everyone. He's very high profile and I think he is very, very good for the programme. He *cares* about the programme, *enormously*.

I know there's been that article in *Starburst*, and I've got no intention of plumping on each side of that, but I will say that Eric Saward has done himself and others an enormous disservice by an awful lot of what he said in that. I've spoken to him on the telephone and he has intimated regrets about certain elements of it. I won't say anymore about that, just judge it from the fact that if Eric had really felt all that, what kind of hypocrite does it make him to have stayed on the programme that long? He implies that it was like that for *five years*. I, or anyone I know that I respect, would have got out earlier had it been like that.

Eric and I have had lots of chats about the programme. He's never said to me that he thinks I was not very good as the Doctor, in fact he was very flattering and buoyant towards me. It makes me think that everything he's ever said to me before is a lie. I think that if he had had the guts to say to me, 'Look, I don't think you're right for the Doctor, Col', I'd have had a lot more respect for him now, but I think he's been a coward and I would say it to his face, and that's why I don't mind saying it to you.

It is John's intention to leave anyway. He has wanted to for two or three years and he has been cajoled and persuaded to stay because the BBC knows when it is on to a good thing - he's done their job for them. BBC Enterprises have done very little themselves. There's very strong signs within Enterprises that they are actually becoming enterprising at last, but for the last six or seven years John has taken the programme to the world single-handedly, so I think it's unfair to criticise him for doing that and the fact that he chooses on a Friday night to go to America and come back on a Monday morning and go to the office. Occasionally from rehearsal one has cause to ring either Eric or John - nine times out of ten Eric wasn't there, nine times out of ten John was, and that's absolutely true! Eric was in about one day a fortnight and he was the *script editor*! We wanted to do changes but he was never there! (This is not something I would normally say if he was not levelling it at John).

I think John actually has been very hurt by what has been going on, and he is actually a caring man. It's very easy to mistake flamboyance for personal hubris. He's actually a very generous man when people make mistakes. He's not one to say, 'Right, I'm going to say 'orrible things about you back'. He doesn't do it, and I think that takes a lot more guts. Pip and Jane Baker, who have been Presidents of the Writers' Guild and involved with motion pictures and big American TV series, say that John Nathan-Turner is one of the best producers they have ever worked with in television in terms of the interest he takes in the scripts. I don't know John as a producer during the script stage so I can't say whether it's true or false, but when the writers say that they are impressed by the fact that the producer knows exactly what's going on during all their dealings, it does actually put the lie to what Eric has been saying. People forget that at the beginning of John's period everyone was saying how wonderful he was.

I have changed scripts, but it was made fairly clear to me at the beginning that the kind of way Doctor Who is made does not allow time for the actor who is playing the Doctor to sit at planning meetings and discuss how the scripts are going to be written. Eric and John both preferred to work on the basis that they would finish a script and then, if I had any ideas, they would either say 'No' or 'Yes, alright, we'll change it'. I am a little more inclined to want things to be accurate in terms of the history of the show. For *Attack of the Cybermen* we spent hours discussing whether I would feel the cold so much as the other characters, and I pointed out that the Doctor had said at some time that you can't fire a weapon in the TARDIS. They said that was dealt with in a previous story and you can now, and I insisted on checking that was so. I might also say, 'Look, isn't this a bit tacky', and they may say, 'Do it, that's what you're paid for', and then I do because my job is to act.

I understand that Tom took an active interest in everything that went on and was allowed to. I think that's dangerous, even though I'd love to do it. I'd love to be in on the script-writing stage — I've got so many wonderful ideas (I think they're wonderful, anyway!). Before Season 23 was cancelled I thought the Celestial Toymaker script was superb. I was really excited about that and I was very sorry when that was shelved. That was the only one from the cancelled season that I saw. I was actually allowed to put more in this season, which is quite nice. I attempted to in the first season and was, quite rightly, told, 'No, I think Robert Holmes would rather you said his lines rather than your witty ones'. Lines I did put in, like 'Peri, eh?'; that was a John Nathan-Turner and me collaboration. All the tacky jokes come from me!

I think the claim that John's scared of talented directors is nonsense. Peter Moffat is a *very* experienced director. A lot of the older directors — who are very experienced and accomplished — go out of fashion and new and young producers want to get new and young directors. What they overlook is that forty years of experience does actually teach them something. Also an awful lot of directors won't touch DOCTOR WHO because they're terrified of it. For instance, a director well known for being extremely autocratic as well as doing wonderful stuff was offered a DOCTOR WHO by John. Now, John would not do that if he was 'frightened' of good directors. He said, 'I'd love to, John, but for one thing — I couldn't cope with all that technical stuff'. He could cope with Laurence Olivier and people like that, but he'd never done CSO, etc., and that was why he turned it down.

I think you should tailor your director to the story. Ron Jones I found one of the nicest directors to work with. He creates a lovely atmosphere to work in, is very receptive to good ideas and very firm in squashing bad ones. I thought *Vengeance on Varos* was one of the best stories in terms of the directorial input I've ever seen. I tend not to view the individual moments, I watch the whole thing (people can criticise tiny little things in a Graeme Harper story if you wanted to). I suspect that even Peter Moffat would admit that if you're filming in a hacienda in Spain you are tempted to show why you've gone out there, so it is tempting to have the establishing shot of the Sontarans in a wide shot rather than a close shot.

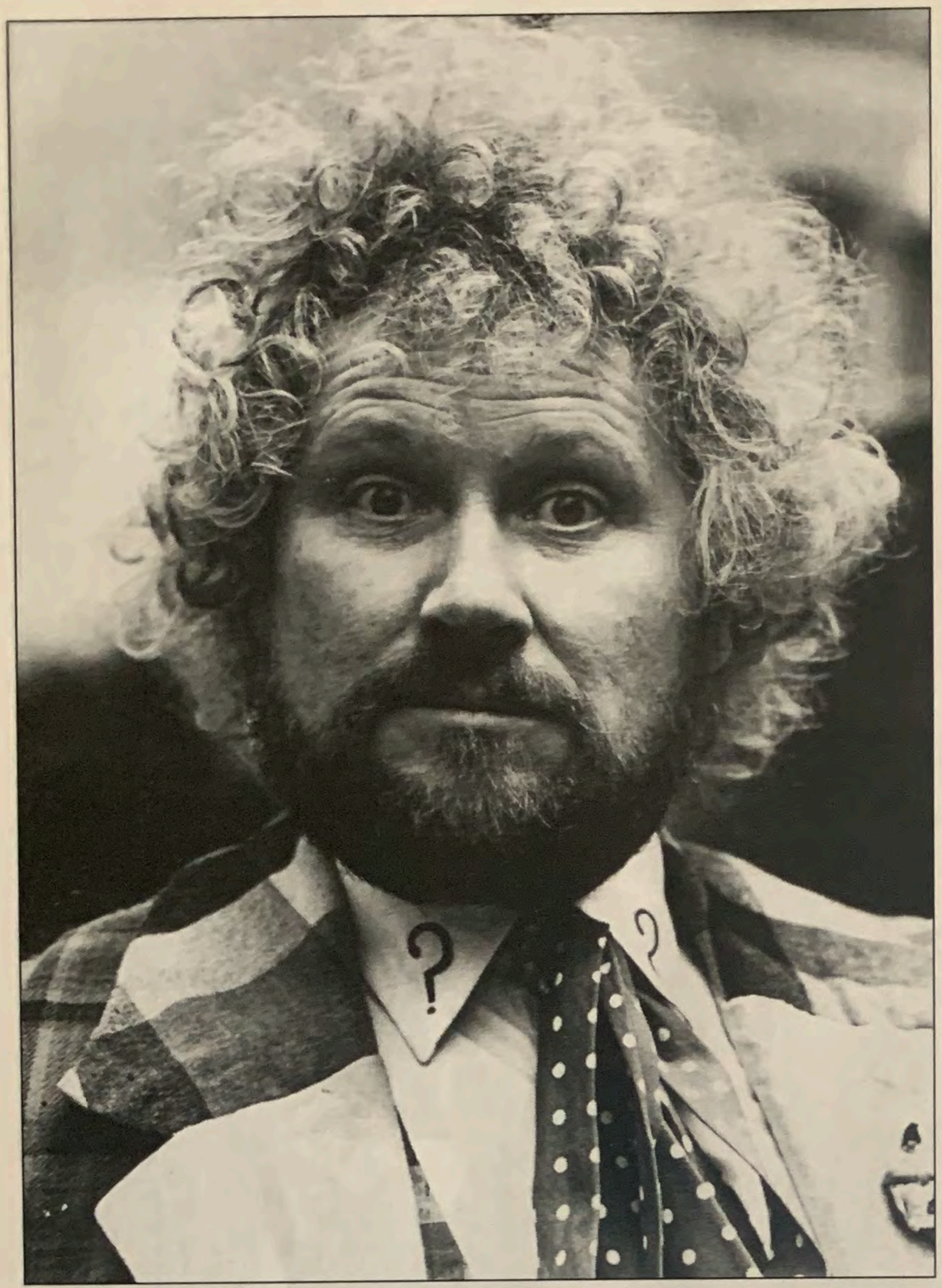
Obviously if next season (*24*) goes ahead we would have a new script editor, but whether we have a new producer or not is ultimately up to the BBC and JNT. The BBC has ways of bringing pressure on people and they do like the status quo. I might get someone new who is just a timeserver; who does not give a damn about the programme and who commissions cheap, bad scripts. It could also happen that someone with enormous energy, a new Douglas Adams or a new John Nathan-Turner, comes into the show. Obviously any new broom is going to sweep something. It might not be clean but it would be a sweep of some kind. It's like when everyone says, 'Who did you like best, Nicola or Bonnie?' I was very sad to see Nicola go but it was exciting to work with someone else. I would be very sad to see John go, but depending on who the other guy was there would be a little nagging fear that a new producer might want another Doctor, because he wouldn't have chosen me.

I think Bonnie Langford will be one area where the fans are going to eat their words, which is quite nice! I'm *very* impressed. I've worked with her before in panto and I know that Bonnie is a total professional. There aren't many criticisms of John Nathan-Turner I'll comment on, because a lot of it's opinion and a lot of it's just stupid, but the thing about him having a 'light entertainment obsession' is extremely odd. Who are these light entertainment people he's supposed to be obsessed with? He has never worked in light entertainment for a start, he's always worked in drama. The ones I've seen in those lists are people like Rodney Bewes and co. who are *actors*! Chloe Ashcroft was an actress before she was in PLAY SCHOOL and her aunt is Peggy Ashcroft. The fact that he puts on pantomimes is a different thing altogether.

The press call on 23rd January 1986 to introduce Bonnie Langford as Mel

Yes, it is sometimes tempting to get names into the show, but the other thing that happens is that names *want* to get in the show. You could try and get all those people into a lot of other drama shows and they wouldn't want to do it, but there is something about DOCTOR WHO which attracts them all. Brian (*Blessed*) was wonderful and is wonderful. Joan Simms was wonderful; you might say she does *Carry Ons* but she's an *actress*. She's been in serious stuff too. You're doing what the producers and directors do to us all the time which is type-cast. The most difficult thing to do is comedy, and if you can do comedy you can damn well do anything else!

Bonnie has approached the part with the attitude that, as an actress, she's delighted to get the chance because she has been stuck in light entertainment. She is very bright for 22 years old and she's always right on the button - I've now had two companions who always know the lines and the moves quicker than I do! A pain in the bum, really, but she is *excellent*. Occasionally, at first, she was tempted to be a little larger than life because she is a stage performer, but the directors have really worked on her. Obviously she's an ambitious, hard-working girl and I shouldn't think she'd want to do DOCTOR WHO for ten years, although an old hack at my age of life would be quite happy to!



"Me? Overweight? Never!"

THE MACHINERY is in motion for the next series, I know that - the publicity departments at the BBC are *desperate* for it - but Grade has proved he is the kind of man who will stop the machinery, so I'm not going to beg the question and say 'Yes, we're safe' until I've got my contract, and even then you're not safe. They've got an option on me. My contract to do DOCTOR WHO runs out, I think, at the end of this month, and then, from the end of this week until the new one begins (if they took the option up), I'm free to do anything I like.

I don't know what the reaction to this season will be. I've thought about it over and over again. With fan magazines, ten pages of 'DOCTOR WHO is really great' and 'Colin Baker is wonderful' won't do. It's like newspapers, which sell more with disasters, pain and misery. You want to find something sensational. I'm sure you do go after the truth, or the truth as it is reported to you. I know it has been said, 'Oh, don't do an interview with him', but I personally have nothing to hide. I have been asked for the last two years what I think of Michael Grade and the national Press have tried to trap me into saying anything which they could twist into being even remotely critical of somebody. What is so ludicrous is that I have *no* personal axe to grind against Michael Grade. If he was playing the Doctor he might be bloody awful, and I might be bloody awful as a Controller. I've got to let him do his job.

I read all the fan magazines, I enjoy doing so. I get wounded by criticism of course. If I read that Fred Bloggs from Scunthorpe has written to your magazine and said, 'I think Colin Baker is a stinker', it hurts, of course it does, any criticism hurts. And then I read ten letters that say, 'I think Colin Baker is all right', and I feel a bit better, but I still remember the one that says I wasn't more than the ones that say I was. Do I like meeting the fans? I think it depends on the fan and what you're doing at the time. If you're actually having a wee in a public lavatory and someone comes up and asks you for your autograph — which has actually happened to me — you do think, 'Couldn't you wait outside, and would you please *stop* looking over the top of the urinal!'

There is an *enormous* difference between the British character and the American character, and that's reflected in the fans. Whereas a British fan is, a) more likely to be critical, which doesn't endear him to me but is to be expected, and, b) is likely to say, even if he was potty about the programme, 'I enjoy DOCTOR WHO, Mr Baker', an American fan on the other hand would tend to say 'Aw gee, the Doctorrrrr!', and they scream and rush around the place! I view the latter with the same kind of cynical view as I do the former. The shy approach of the British fan might mask a lot more appreciation than the brash approach of the American fan, or vice versa. I'm not saying there's any inherent difference between the two that makes one better than the other. I look at you two and I would put you in the category of the typical British fan; young, male, between 17 and 25, inclined to apparent seriousness. Actually you, Gary, are an exception because you've got a twinkle, but the average fan in this country, like you, Tim, would be a typical fan (no criticism implied!), whereas in America the typical fan would be female, slightly older, and maybe inclined to be a little over weight. That's why they like me so much, because I am a little overweight myself!

I'd like to put the record straight, actually. Charles Catchpole is a reporter on *The Sun* with whom I had done interviews before, and had been very pleasant and sympathetic when my son died. I had thought 'This is a reporter I can trust'. So when I got a message to ring him, I did, and he said, 'What's all this I hear about you putting two stone on since they cancelled the show?'

'I haven't - I'm about the same weight as I was a year ago and two years ago'.

'Oh, I'd heard you'd put on a huge amount of weight?'

'Sorry, but I'm afraid I haven't. I'm more or less the same - in fact I'm probably even four or five pounds less than when the season finished'.

'Oh. By the way, is your wife a good cook?'

'Yes, she is actually'.

'Do you eat lots of steak and kidney pud?'

'Do you know, I haven't had steak and kidney pud for twenty years, and I hate it because I love 'em!'

'Do you drink a lot?'

'Well, my wife and I might have a bottle of wine over dinner sometimes...'

And then I read an article four days later which read '*I have put on two stones. I have steak and kidney pud with all the trimmings and I drink a bottle of wine a day*'. I actually photocopied it, underlined in red all the bits that Charles had made up and posted it to him with a little note saying 'More in sorrow than in anger'. I saw him about a week ago and he turned the other way. People say why don't you sue *The Sun*, but there's no point. All it does is prolong a story which is trivial enough as it is, although it is irritating when I get fan magazines from America which report that apparently Colin Baker has put on two stone and the production team are worried.

Yes, the *Peter Pan* photos *were* dreadful. I was in full costume and underneath was this sodding great harness which pushed everything up, and the girl who did my hair did it in a hurry and made it all look tightly curled, making my head look like an enormous football! I do agree that it fitted in with those stories, but I have *not* put on weight. I was called into a costume fitting at the beginning of the season, about a week after the article, ostensibly to make a new waistcoat, and I got the distinct impression that they were all thinking where there's smoke there's fire, and were amazed when my costume from the previous season fitted exactly the same way as before!" ❑

● **Interviewed by Tim Collins and Gary Leigh**

"Whichever Doctor had been playing the part when Michael Grade came into the BBC would have been subject to his plans" - September 1987

"THIS TIME LAST YEAR (i.e. August 1986) I had just finished doing *The Trial of a Time Lord*. We left the studio with a party and we all said, 'See you all next year'. I kept in close contact with John Nathan-Turner because we did the conventions together. When the time came for the option on my contract to be taken up by the BBC, at the end of October, he rang me and said, 'I don't even know if we're doing the programme - they haven't even told me that I'm producing it next year', so the option lapsed.

At the beginning of November, he rang me up and said, 'I've got some bad news - the programme is going ahead but Michael Grade has instructed me to replace the Doctor'. I was quite surprised, you know, that sort of blood-draining-from-your-veins kind of feeling. John said he told them he thought it was a dreadful mistake, but they were adamant. 'Grade says three years is quite enough. He said nothing derogatory about your performance, but he thinks a new Doctor will give the programme a boost so he has ordered me to cast a new Doctor. I have pointed out that you have only done one and a half seasons, but he remains adamant that that is long enough and it's time for a change'.

Three days later I got a phone call from the BBC asking me to go to America with Grade to publicise DOCTOR WHO, which I thought was rather odd. I agreed to do it on the basis that I might be able to find out some more, but he avoided me very cleverly throughout the whole time I was there. All I've ever got from anybody, including Jonathan Powell, was nothing but praise, but they had decided that three years is enough and there is not much you can do about that.

> *"All I've ever got from anybody, including Jonathan Powell, was nothing but praise, but they had decided that three years was enough and there is not much you can do about that"*

It went against what I was asked to do when I started the show. David Reid - Powell's predecessor - asked me if I was prepared to commit myself to the programme for *four* years, because they were sad that Peter had left after only three and they wanted a longer term commitment. Having said yes in 1983 to four years of 26 episodes a year, I actually did one year of 26 episodes (or equivalent), the next year nothing at all, the following year 14 episodes, and then I was unceremoniously bundled out, so I felt fairly aggrieved. I had made all kinds of long-term commitments like moving house and things like that, and to have all that suddenly taken away from you is bloody annoying!

I think the major problem, if there was a problem, is that I had less good stories per square inch than many of my predecessors did. Even my favourite writer, Robert Holmes, was not up to vintage Robert Holmes. I think the scripts were definitely weaker. I loved doing *The Two Doctors* - I was working working with Pat - but it was not a *Pyramids of Mars* or a *Talons of Weng-Chiang*. It just wasn't there. My Doctor was my Doctor, like it or loathe it. People say I should have done more with it, but whenever I tried to put stuff in it was very heavily squashed.

I guess episode thirteen of *The Trial of a Time Lord* is the one that springs to mind as my best. That was Robert Holmes' last episode, and whatever anybody says, even when he was failing he was still the best. I thought that *Trial* was a combination of very good ideas which didn't totally work, and I'll give you an example why. The second story, *Mindwarp*, was quite difficult to do because I was saying to the director, 'Look, in this scene is it the Matrix lying, is it the Doctor pretending to be mad, is he really mad or is the Matrix lying about any of those possibilities?', and he said 'Dunno, you'd better ask Eric'. So I asked Eric, who said, 'I dunno, you'd better ask Philip Martin'. And Philip Martin told me to ask Eric as he'd told him what to write anyway! I had to work it out for myself, and I think that is a bit slapdash. If you're doing a complicated story like *The Trial of a Time Lord*, then the people editing and writing the bloody thing ought to know what's going on! The attitude to my question about that bit on the rock - 'Was it real? Did it ever happen?...' - was, 'Oh, dunno...better play it as if it did'.

They asked me, in November, to do the first four episodes of the new season after saying they didn't want me. I was working for John Nathan-Turner in panto at Brighton at the time and that finished at the end of January and I was starting *Corpse* in March, so there was only February where I had nothing much to do. If I had said yes I wouldn't have done *Corpse*, so I would have lost six months work for the sake of four weeks work. *Nobody* commits themselves to five months ahead for four weeks work. I didn't *want* to do it anyway. It's a bit like saying to somebody, 'I am your husband/wife, I am going to leave you but I will come back and spend four weeks with you next April'. Would you want to, particularly? I wanted a clean break. I told them, 'I won't do the four episodes but I will do the whole series, and if you want me to leave that much I'll go at the end', but they wouldn't do that.

The majority of colleagues and friends were very supportive, which was very heartening, knowing that all those people that one had respected in the business actually put themselves on the line and said 'We rate you'. Fans' reactions vary. I've had hundreds and thousands, literally, of very nice letters, but I also read fan magazines - which I can't resist reading because they get sent to me - and some of them (as is their right) express their opinion that I was bloody awful, that I'm a ham, that I'm over the top - which is missing the entire point of my Doctor because it was *deliberately* over the top - and it is just as well I was replaced. It is something that you have to take in your stride. The one thing you must *not* do is let it get to you or feel the urge to reply.

I had a go at Eric Saward for the *Starburst* thing because he had a relationship with John Nathan-Turner and me which, on the surface, I assumed was an honest relationship. He never told me he didn't think I was very good, and I think that is dishonest. On the other hand, I never had any relationship at all with Michael Grade so I can say what I like to *The Sun*, and I said that he was not particularly kind to me. The only thing I questioned was the way it was put together. The first day they got the copy to me in time for me to approve it, but the second day they didn't and it was re-edited to suit them and I got an apology.

Basically what they do is string together your answers to their questions as if you had volunteered the information. I had said I wanted, in the course of this article, to say thank you to the fans who, over the last three years, really rallied around and helped me in raising money for the Cot Death Foundation. There was no reason why they should have taken my charity work on but they did, wholeheartedly, and raised a lot of money. Then the reporter asked, 'I suppose now that you have been sacked they won't be doing that anymore?'

'No, I suppose they won't, they'll have a new Doctor and quite rightly they'll follow his charity'.

'So how do you feel about Michael Grade now that he has deprived Cot Death of cash?'

'He *hasn't* done that. He *didn't* say "I am going to harm babies", he said, "I want a new actor in the part"'. But they don't print that bit, they print the headline: *MY SACKING WILL HIT COT*

DEATH CASH! Yes, I'd said it, but it was in answer to *their* question! They also asked me if I thought it possible that, as Michael Grade had worked closely with Lisa Goddard, my first wife, he might labour some bias against me for some reason? I replied that I thought that rather unlikely - you don't get to be Controller of BBC1 by indulging in that kind of personal prejudice. Again this was reversed and attributed to me in the article. Of course I received money for the article, I wouldn't have done it otherwise. Suddenly I had a whole series of Doctor Who taken away from me and money came in extremely useful at a very difficult time.

I'VE ALWAYS found it easy to get rid of one part and move on to the next one. I felt right for the Doctor the very first time I opened my mouth and I did not find it difficult to do. I enjoyed it and it was my version of the Doctor. Every actor has a Hamlet; it may not be a very interesting, funny or dramatic Hamlet, but it is their Hamlet, and it is the same with the Doctor. I know that others found it quite daunting starting off in the part, but I didn't.

Every night after *Corpse* there are half a dozen people outside the stage door. They are just the ones who bother to come round, and I always think that must be one in ten of the ones who don't. It is marvellous. Let's face it, that is why they have got me in *Corpse*, because they hope it will bring people to the box office. We've done eight weeks now and the business is getting better, but the future is blank from then on. In November I am probably going to the States for a couple of weeks of conventions. One of the major convention organisers has stopped doing it and Lionheart Films - who distribute BBC programmes in the States - have started to put the screws on the others. They are artificially trying to cut down on the number of conventions by refusing permission to show videos and things like that so that they can get in on the market themselves, but I don't think there is any diminishing of interest whatsoever.

"The truth about me and Tom 'not getting on' is that Tom is not an easy person to get to know"

The truth about me and Tom 'not getting on' is that Tom is not an easy person to get to know. There are an awful lot of people who become actors because, like me, they are extrovert, and there are some people who find it quite hard to interact with other people, and I must admit the first week of doing conventions with Tom I was uneasy. I was aware that I had to play it gently because I didn't want him to think I was muscling in on his seven years of territory, and he had avoided contact with the other Doctors before. But by the end - and we were out there three weeks together - we got on extremely well. I can show you photographs of the two of us laughing and joking on the way home on the aeroplane, but having said that we are very different people.

You know how Jonathan Miller has that vast enthusiasm and mind-defying intellect and he's a frightening person because you realise you are not as bright as him? I'm not saying I'm not as bright as Tom, but we have different kinds of brightness. He's incredibly well-read. He is the sort of person that, if Virginia Wolf was still having meetings with her friends in Bloomsbury, he'd be there! I wouldn't. I would say he doesn't tolerate fools gladly, and he's just as likely to think you a fool as not unless you make the effort, whereas I'm the opposite; I approach every person I meet as if they are going to be perfectly alright and amenable until I find out that they are not, and then I can be deeply unpleasant to them.

If I had known everything that has happened when I accepted the job - if you had said to me, 'I am offering you a year's work, then a year off, then half a year' - I'd have said On yer bike! I wouldn't have wanted to do it, but having done it it's certainly the best job I have ever done. I loved working with the people, John particularly. I know he comes in for a lot of stick but I think it's miraculous that he stays on doing it - I wouldn't have had the patience! It's a tribute to his staying power that he is prepared to put up with all the flak from the fans. Over in America they are fans because they *like* it and they tend to say nice things about us.

I believe I cared about the programme in terms of its context within the history of the programme rather more than some of my predecessors did, and I just think it's ironic that I was the one that was sacked. It was pure bad timing. Whichever Doctor had been playing the part when Michael Grade came into the BBC would have been subject to his plans." ❑

● **Interviewed by Robert Cope**

"I do have a tendency to go over the top" - July 1989

"AFTER *CORPSE* I did 65 programmes called Cuckoo for the Children's Channel on satellite, which sounds amazing until you learn they were all five minutes each (not something I tell many people because '65 programmes' sounds rather good!). It was all done on a shoestring.

After that I did *Run For Your Wife* in the West End with Terry Scott. Farce has never been a technique I can honestly say I've mastered 100%. I have always believed that you must find the truth in each character you are playing, and in rehearsal with the other actors all the truths combine and hopefully the piece comes alive. Terry Scott does not work that way (he says he does but he doesn't). He gets a laugh by rubbing his hands up and down the inside of his trousers whilst saying a line. The audiences found him funny...he didn't seem to find me very funny. I tried to do it but it just wasn't me, so I had to tell him I was doing it my way. He was an 'I've-been-in-the-business-sixty-years...' school of performer, and if you didn't do what he wanted he just sort of ignored you totally on stage. It wasn't the most enjoyable job I've ever done.

About the same time *The Ultimate Adenture* was bubbling around my agent was being asked about my availability for the tour. At that point I was supposed to be doing a tour of *Double Edge* with Glynis Barber. I thought it might be a mistake to go back to Doctor Who, but then the *Double Edge* tour collapsed and Mr. Pertwee had become involved so that was that. Then I was asked by some acting pals if I would direct a production of Sue (*Adrian Mole*) Townsend's *Bazaar and Rummage* at the Duke of Cambridge in Islington for them. It was a profit-share arrangement and it was one of the most enjoyable jobs I've ever done. The fact that nobody particularly came to see it and we didn't make a penny out of it didn't matter.

I first saw *The Ultimate Adventure* at Wimbledon in the second week, the same day there had been lots of cuts and changes. The curtain went up and there was Karl, a Cyberman and the Emperor Dalek. Then the TARDIS came on and out stepped Jon Pertwee, followed by a blackout! The lights came up again on a rather cross Jon Pertwee who said, 'We *appear* to have landed', and played the scene rather crossly, which set the tone for the rest of the evening. Everything went wrong. I couldn't follow the plot and I just didn't know what was going on. I found myself saying to an usherette at the back of the stalls, 'God, this is awful', and the company manager, Chris Boyle, overheard!

At that point they knew Jon wasn't doing the whole tour and they asked me if I'd be interested in taking over. After that evening at Wimbledon I wasn't at all sure I wanted to be involved, but after talking to Terrance Dicks and Carole Todd - who assured me that all the technical errors would be ironed out - I went to see it again at Bristol, at which point I'd agreed to do it, and I loved it! If there was one major thing that needed to be changed it was the set.

With David Banks and the cast of *The Ultimate Adventure* (1989)

because the scene changes slowed down the action appallingly.

Jon said to me one day, 'You'll find doing this show exhausting', which you have to take in the context that Jon is a much older man than me, but having done *Corpse* it is pure relaxation! If we had had a strong cross wind in *Corpse* I would have been nude because I was held together by velcro!

I *much* prefer working in television. I do have a tendency to go over the top, and during my time in THE BROTHERS I monitored my performance to try and bring it down and ended up just saying my lines and got a reputation for being a dead-pan performer. But I can see how my style of acting comes over well on stage.

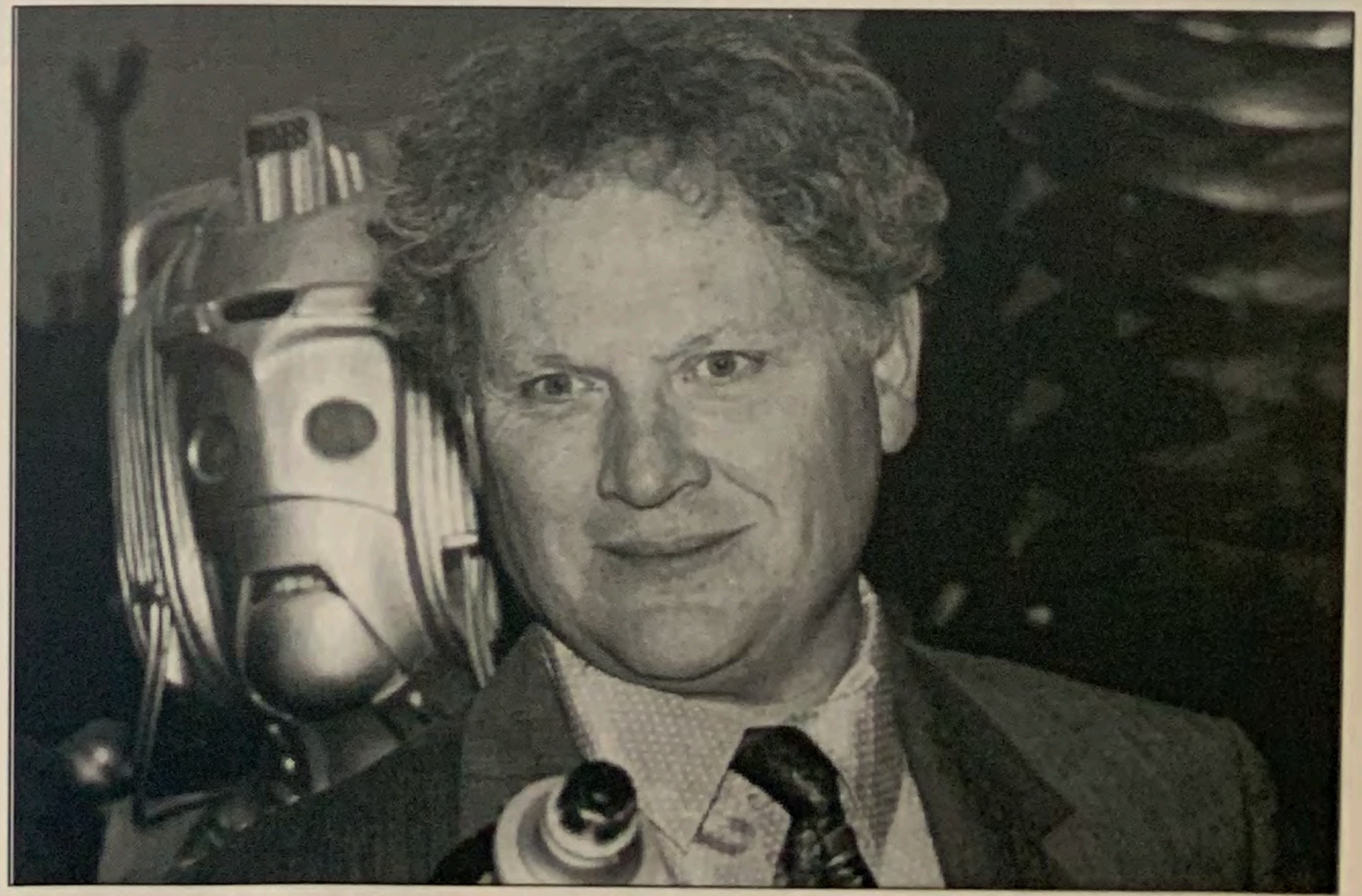
I've just done a third series of CROSS WITS and I enjoy it very much. If I were not a television performer I would apply to go it because I enjoy doing crosswords and I enjoy a challenge. There was one edition where the clue was 'who' and the answer was 'doctor' and I didn't get it! It proves that DOCTOR WHO does not obsess my life!

I've got an episode of CASUALTY coming up in the autumn, which is the first television acting I've done since I left DOCTOR WHO. When I finished in THE BROTHERS it was three years before I got another telly (BLAKE'S 7), and it is about the same since I left DOCTOR WHO. It is a guest role in which I play the husband of a woman who falls downstairs and bangs her head and she is found by a mentally defective gentleman.

I always complain to my agent about not getting me enough telly work, but he says, 'You are always away on tour. People often check on you and I tell them you are not free, but there is no point in telling you because you'll just get upset...'" ❑

- **Interviewed by Robert Cope**

- **Postscript:** *Since appearing in CASUALTY, Colin's career has continued to be dominated by UK theatre tours, in plays as diverse as Born in the Gardens, Spider's Web, Privates on Parade, Time and Time Again, Death and the Maiden, Frankie and Johnny in the Clare De Lune, Nightfright and, of course, in pantomime where he has made Peter Pan's arch adversary - Captain Hook - very much his own. Apart from a brief excursion to Turkey and Prague - where he played a character called Beersheba for an episode of Steven Spielberg's ill-fated THE YOUNG INDIANA JONES CHRONICLES - his UK television appearances have been limited to ITV's weekday morning gameshow filler CROSSWITS and the 14-minute CHILDREN IN NEED skit Dimensions in Time for the BBC. He has also been involved with various independent projects, primarily the Pickwick-distributed Stranger videos directed by Bill Baggs, and his own production company, Visible Ink Ltd., from which he has since resigned his directorship.*

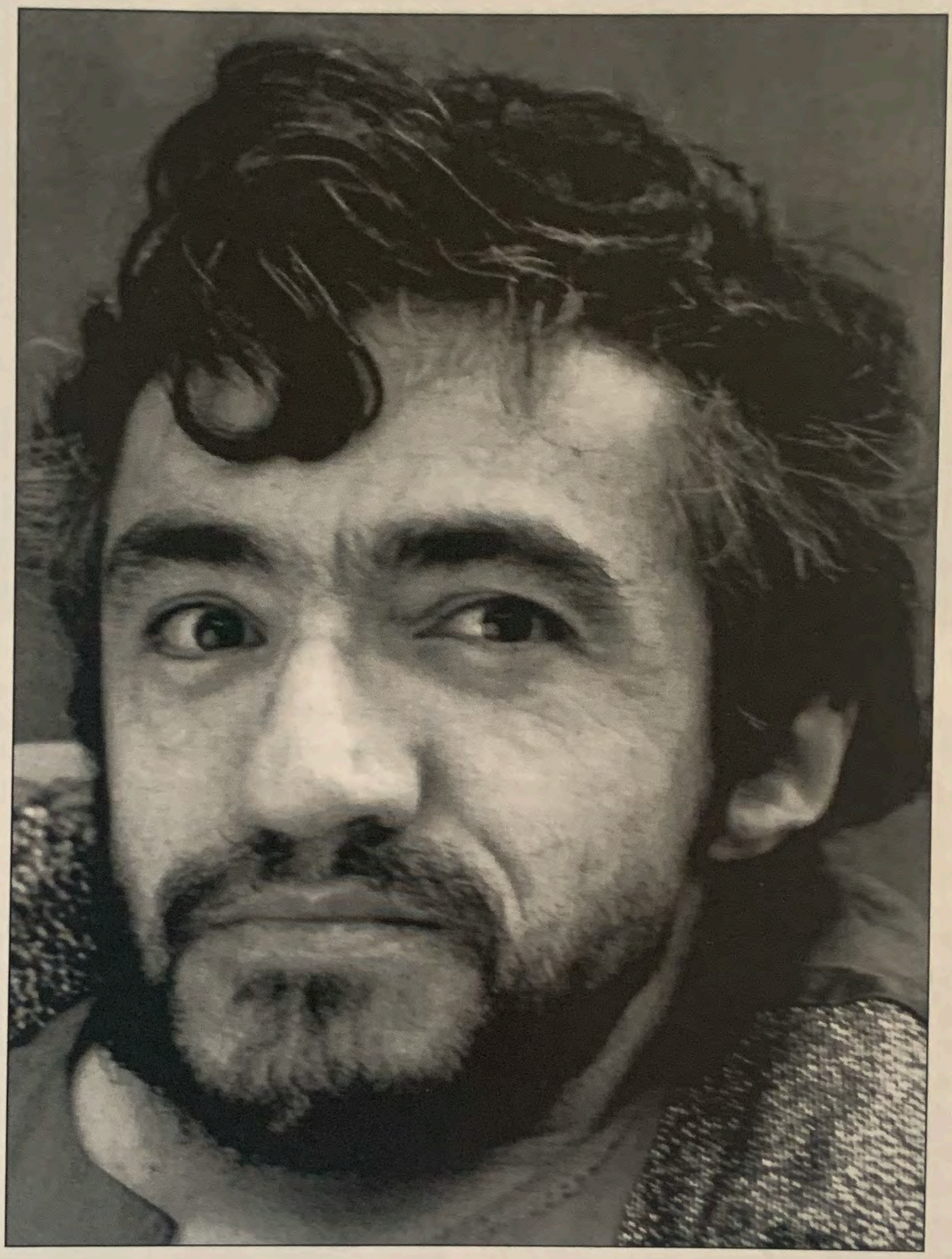


At the launch of the Birmingham DOCTOR WHO Festival (September, 1993)

1985 **the monsters** 1986

Nabil Shaban

"I was a little disheartened when some of the actors thought it was my real laugh" - **August 1986**



"I WAS BORN in Amman, Jordan in Egypt. I came to Britain when I was three and went straight into a special hospital for disabled kids. I was there for six years, and in that time I was in bed constantly and the world that I knew was just the world of that ward. There was a television set in the corner, the 'magic box'. I saw an extraordinary world through that box. Whatever was in it seemed fairly real and I wanted to be able to get inside it.

The first time I realised there was a chance that one could enter into the fantasy world and be something more than a child in a bed was when some Shakespearian actors came into the ward one day, trying to drum up an audience for a production they were doing. Their costumes were extraordinary and I had never seen anything like it before except on television - I didn't think such people existed. I suddenly realised that this was what I wanted to do!

From there I went into a children's home from the age of nine to sixteen. In the playground we used to make up stories based on things we'd seen on television, and DOCTOR WHO was a very popular one for acting out. As a ten-year-old I never saw the first DOCTOR WHO story but I watched it from episode two of *The Daleks* onwards. I missed the first episode because the staff of the children's home wouldn't allow the kids to watch it because they thought it was too frightening, but they made the mistake of allowing me and a friend to go to tea one Saturday afternoon at the local general practitioner's house who had a son the same age as us. After tea the doctor said his son had to watch this programme that's on every Saturday night called DOCTOR WHO. He asked us if we wanted to watch it with him and of course I said yes! We watched this 'forbidden' programme and I was absolutely stunned by it. I just had to watch DOCTOR WHO from then onwards.

When I got back to the children's home I nagged the staff every day to allow us to watch DOCTOR WHO because I had to see the next episode, and by the following Saturday they relented and I was able to see it. I watched DOCTOR WHO consistently from then onwards, right up until I was about twenty-two.

I was always trying to find ways in which I could perform, and for a while I tried to teach myself conjuring and did a couple of shows at parties (as a kid I used to lose interest in things quickly). I then had the idea of being a ventriloquist and once asked the teacher if I could organise a puppet show which I wrote as a pantomime. I actually had an early taste of filming because I was often used in documentaries filmed at the school about the physically handicapped. I don't know why they always chose me, perhaps because I was a chatterbox!

Between the age of sixteen to nineteen I had to go to a sheltered workshop to do office studies, which I hated! A friend of mine asked me what I'd rather do, and at first I was very reluctant to tell him because he was a member of staff. I didn't trust them because they didn't respect what we really wanted to do and I thought he would laugh. They were always trying to place us in very 'sensible' occupations like accountancy, and for me to suggest I wanted to be an actor would normally have just been laughed out of court. I was surprised when he actually took me seriously and suggested I wrote to drama schools to find out what a handicapped person could do acting-wise - after all, I could hardly play a knight in shining armour - and what the possibilities were.

So I wrote letters to drama schools all over the country, including RADA, and all of them said there was no way I could go to any of their institutions. A few of them tried to be a bit more positive and suggested that I join the local amateur dramatic group or set up a little play-reading group and do plays on tape-recorders. One or two suggested I get in touch with Michael Flanders, who was the wheelchair-bound half of a double-act, Flanders and Swann.

who did revue shows which were very popular in the Sixties and early Seventies.

So I contacted Michael and asked him how he got started in a wheelchair. He explained that when he contracted polio he was already big as a showbiz entertainer and had so many contacts and such a reputation that he was still able to continue. He felt it unlikely that I would be able to work as a performer if I tried to enter it in the conventional route and felt I had to find other ways of getting into showbiz. He reckoned the best way would be for me to become a writer and that the material I write should be completely unique, which would create a demand for myself. Having established myself as a writer, I should then start writing things giving myself the best roles! He recommended I write experiences from my own life that nobody else could possibly have had, and I felt a bit depressed by that because I didn't feel I had anything worth writing about.

In 1980 I wrote to John Nathan-Turner suggesting myself as the fifth Doctor, along with a little story about the Doctor being transformed into something like me. I also sent him reviews of my work. He replied personally and said he thought the story I had written was very funny and he wanted to keep it, but unfortunately they had already done the casting for that season with Peter Davison as the Doctor. Just before we recorded *Mindwarp* I had lunch with JNT and brought the subject up again of me being the next Doctor, but he didn't think that it was a very practical proposition.

> *"I saw that Sil had an eerie laugh. That worried me a bit because I knew that the laugh had to be something very special, it had to convey his malevolency. I didn't want to do the sort of witches cackle or the Master's 'Heh, heh, heh'"*

MY DETERMINATION to be an actor was so strong that I was prepared to take up training as a local preacher, because here was the chance for me to perform to a captive audience and I was going to be able to write my own material! I started to train as a preacher in a local Methodist Church but halfway through the course I had a guilty conscience because I knew I didn't believe in it at all and that this was pure opportunism on my part!

Then I went to a college for disabled people and started a national diploma in business studies. Whilst there I met Richard Tomlinson, a lecturer who was very interested in drama. He believed that people with disabilities had a lot of interesting material which would form the basis of good drama. He saw that disabled people had just as much potential to perform as able-bodied. He set up some drama workshops in the evenings and invited those people who were interested in producing drama which would exploit our experiences as disabled people. We then turned this into comedy sketches and musical routines and knitted them together into a sort of revue which we took on tour. We were called Ready Salted Crips (Crips being the abbreviation for cripples), and toured around Warwickshire where the college was based. It was basically a send-up of able-bodied people's attitudes and misconceptions towards the disabled.

This group was the forerunner of a group Richard and I eventually formed in 1980 called The Graeae (pronounced greyeye), which still exists. The original intention of Graeae was to, firstly, provide disabled performers with the opportunity to act, because there were no other opportunities at that time; secondly, to educate the public about issues concerning disability; thirdly, to entertain them because we believed that you can't really educate without entertaining; and lastly, to change their attitudes and to destroy the misconceptions and myths concerning disability.

Our first major venture was a tour of Illinois in America, and after that we went to Canada for an international convention on disability and rehabilitation. The shows proved to be an enormous success, and whilst in Canada a BBC producer from an Open University series, called HANDICAPPED PERSON IN THE COMMUNITY, asked if I would be a presenter of one of her programmes. That was my first professional engagement.

After North America we decided to get the company going in Britain. We were soon receiving rave reviews in *The Guardian, The Times Education Supplement* and *Time Out*. Then the BBC got to hear about us and they asked if they could do a documentary on us for the ARENA series, which was shown in 1981 to coincide with The International Year Of The Disabled. This gave me the chance to show someone what I could do who eventually perhaps was going to offer me work. For example, ARENA led directly on to a television play/documentary called *Walter* (the producer offered me the part of Ben Gunn). Martin Jarvis's wife, who had seen me in ARENA, was one of the people who recommended me for the part of Sil.

Ron Jones had been trying to find someone to play Sil and wasn't having much success, so he decided to get in touch with me through Graeae. I think he was a bit nervous I might not agree to take the part if I thought that Sil was just a monster who was going to reinforce the sort of stereotype people have about the disabled. Eventually Graeae was reassured that this was going to be a good speaking part, a prominent part, and that it was unlikely that there was anything which would reflect badly on moral issues of disability. In fact an appointment was made for the next day because they only had two weeks to go before work on *Vengeance on Varos* (*1985*), and I think Ron was anxious to find out whether I was right for the part.

The audition was at the Graeae office. Ron seemed really friendly and easy-going and I felt there were good vibes between us.

He said very briefly what Sil was. I got the impression that he was a reptilian creature that lived underwater a lot of the time. It was in the original script that he was in this goldfish bowl and there'd be some sort of liquid to keep me cool inside and the attendents would carry the bowl about with me inside it, but they decided that was too impractical. I'd like to have done that because I had the idea that not only would I be inside this goldfish bowl, but I would have lots of snakes in the bowl with me slithering around!

One of the problems with the goldfish bowl idea was the reflection of the studio lights. To give the impression of water they could have done double-glazing and had water in between the two pieces of glass. It would have looked quite amazing but it was a question of budgets and time, and DOCTOR WHO always compromises quite heavily on the original idea.

I read for Ron and I saw that Sil had an eerie laugh. That worried me a bit because I knew that the laugh had to be something very special, it had to convey his malevolency. I didn't want to do the sort of witches cackle or the Master's 'Heh, heh, heh'. Ron knew the laugh I gave him wasn't really a serious attempt, but I think he thought that didn't matter and we could work on it. After I'd finished reading he said, 'Well, I'll lay my cards on the table; I want you for the part. Are you interested?'. Of course I said yes, and I had two weeks to prepare myself.

I knew that 'The Laugh' was to be Sil's trademark in the same way that 'Exterminate' was associated with the Daleks, and I wanted to be able to create something that the kids would want to imitate. I tried various laughs and none of them satisfied me. Then I remembered a friend of mine who had some pet snakes, one of which I had handled and examined at close hand, stroking it and watching its tongue movement. I started to move my tongue as I remembered seeing the snake doing it, flicking it up and down, and

I realised that could well be the laugh. I practised it for two weeks, then I went to the readthrough and I was really quite nervous because I didn't know what the reaction would be. To my pleasure I found that everyone laughed and liked it (although I was a little disheartened when some of the actors thought it was my *real* laugh!). I notice Anthony Hopkins did something similar for Hannibal Lecter in *Silence of the Lambs*.

This was the first main character part I had played on television and I was very scared because I was playing with hardened professionals. That's why I made sure I knew every line before I went into rehearsal, which was quite funny because I suddenly discovered that a lot of actors don't learn their lines until towards the time of recording, and some were in rehearsals carrying their scripts. I thought they were going to think I was a right swot from day one so I had to pretend I didn't know my lines!

I didn't really see myself made-up properly until I eventually watched the video and I was very impressed (it took two hours just putting the make-up on!). It was really strange because when you see yourself dressed up like that you don't really see yourself anymore - it's something that's different, that's separate from you. Ron had expressly said that the head was supposed to be separate to give it complete movement and therefore more flexibility to my acting, but the people who made the suit got it wrong and did it as a one-piece so we had to hack the head off. If my head was just looking straight ahead, which is what would have happened if it had been a one-piece suit, it just wouldn't have given it scope.

When I did *Varos*, my friend Tom Watt (Lofty in EASTENDERS) assisted me. We'd become mates when we both performed with an able-bodied theatre company in 1983 in an improvised show called *Crutch*. During *Varos* he would be responsible for lifting me from my wheelchair onto the life-support machine, he'd bring me coffee between takes and keep me cool with cold water and a battery fan (he had to be careful that the make-up dust didn't go into my eyes because my eyes would start to run and so would the make-up!). In cases where the glue holding the mask to my face came unstuck, I would turn my head to look at someone but the head-mask wouldn't turn with me so you'd just get half a face!

I WAS QUITE disappointed when the series was cancelled because it was another opportunity whereby I could move forward being nipped in the bud. I heard about the cancellation from my upstairs neighbours who'd read it in *The Daily Mail*, so I then rang up the DOCTOR WHO office to find out whether this was true because they'd already booked me to do the Ice Warrior story. It had all been booked - I got paid for it!

In *Mindwarp* (*1986*), the body was the same but there were better frills around my neck. The head was completely new and smaller, and because the material it was made of was much softer it was a lot more flexible. Also, they put some extra frill around the circumference of my face to give a better finish between my face and where the head is so it looked much smoother. There were still certain things which were niggly and from which I wish they'd learned from their mistakes. For example, for the new version it still got very hot inside the head and we ended up having to puncture it with holes to let out steam!

***Mindwarp*, 1986**

I watched *Varos* before I started to work on *Mindwarp* to refresh my memory about Sil and to try to recreate the 'feel' of Sil, but there is a slight difference in *Mindwarp*. I thought there were times in *Mindwarp* where Sil would have been looking for the main chance but didn't, and that had it been the Sil prior to Michael Grade's intervention he might have been different. I don't think *Varos* was gratuitous; I think what it was saying was quite valid. It was describing a future on a planet whereby the State seeks to control the people - who haven't got much control of their own lives - by 'feeding' them violence as entertainment, and that is something that has gone on in the past and goes on in certain ways now. We had the Falklands War which was like State-controlled violence as entertainment (i.e. all those Falklands War videos that were produced afterwards).

I think what Philip Martin did was perfectly valid. Ron Jones apparently had a letter from some nut who likened him as someone who was in with the Nazis, who enjoyed torturing people, etc. What *Varos* showed was violence which was gratuitous but it was still integral to the plot, whereas when you talk about gratuitous violence in a film or TV programme you're talking about someone being beaten up just for the sake of being beaten up. What's happening in *Varos* is that you're actually seeing that process from one step beyond. In other words you're watching a viewer who's watching gratuitous violence, but that does not make it gratuitous violence from your point of view because you're understanding that they are talking about it.

Mindwarp is much more tongue in cheek because they were very conscious of the need to cut down on the violence. When I saw the script the emphasis had shifted to more comedy, but I don't know whether that was a direction as a viewer of DOCTOR WHO I would necessarily have liked. I preferred — not just as a kid — DOCTOR WHO when it was intellectually stimulating but also scary. When I first played Sil I wanted to make him as scary as possible, and when people were writing into POINTS OF VIEW complaining about this disgusting monster Sil, I thought I had succeeded because that was exactly what I had wanted to do.

For *Mindwarp* Trebor sweets apparently manufactured a sweet which Sil eats called Marshminnow, which is plugged quite a lot in the show, although of course no-one refers to it as Trebor's Marshminnows! I eat the green slime which contains genuine Marshminnows but you can't recognise them. I didn't like them at all, they were revolting!

If I found that Sil was the only work I ever did, then I think I'd get a bit pissed off, but if I was getting other work as well then I would actually enjoy playing Sil once a year or every two years. But to devote one's life as an actor to playing a monster, or any kind of character, I think would defeat my original hope of being an actor." ❑

● **Interviewed by Gary Leigh**

● **Postscript:** *Since 1986, I have played on stage a number of fascinating roles. These have included Haile Selassie in Jonathan Miller's The Emperor (which got me into trouble with some Rastafarians), Ayatollah Khomeni in Iranian Knights (which nearly got me into trouble with Islamic fundamentalists), and Jesus in Godspell (which could have got me into trouble with Billy Graham and David Koresh, but they're not theatre buffs so I got away with it!). I played Hamlet in 1988, but as the Great Dane has a history of weirdos playing him, no one batted an eyelid.*

In 1991, I had my first sex scene on television, in a play about a gang of Hell's Angels in Deptford Graffiti, and Roland Joffe had me burned and nearly drowned (though not at the same time) in the Hollywood movie City of Joy which starred Patrick Swayze, Om Puri and Pauline Collins. For this I was nearly arrested by the Calcuttan police. In 1992 I played a gay lover in Channel Four's OUT and the BBC had me playing God in Billy's Christmas Angels. As you can see from the above, I am not called 'Kami-kazi actor' for nothing!

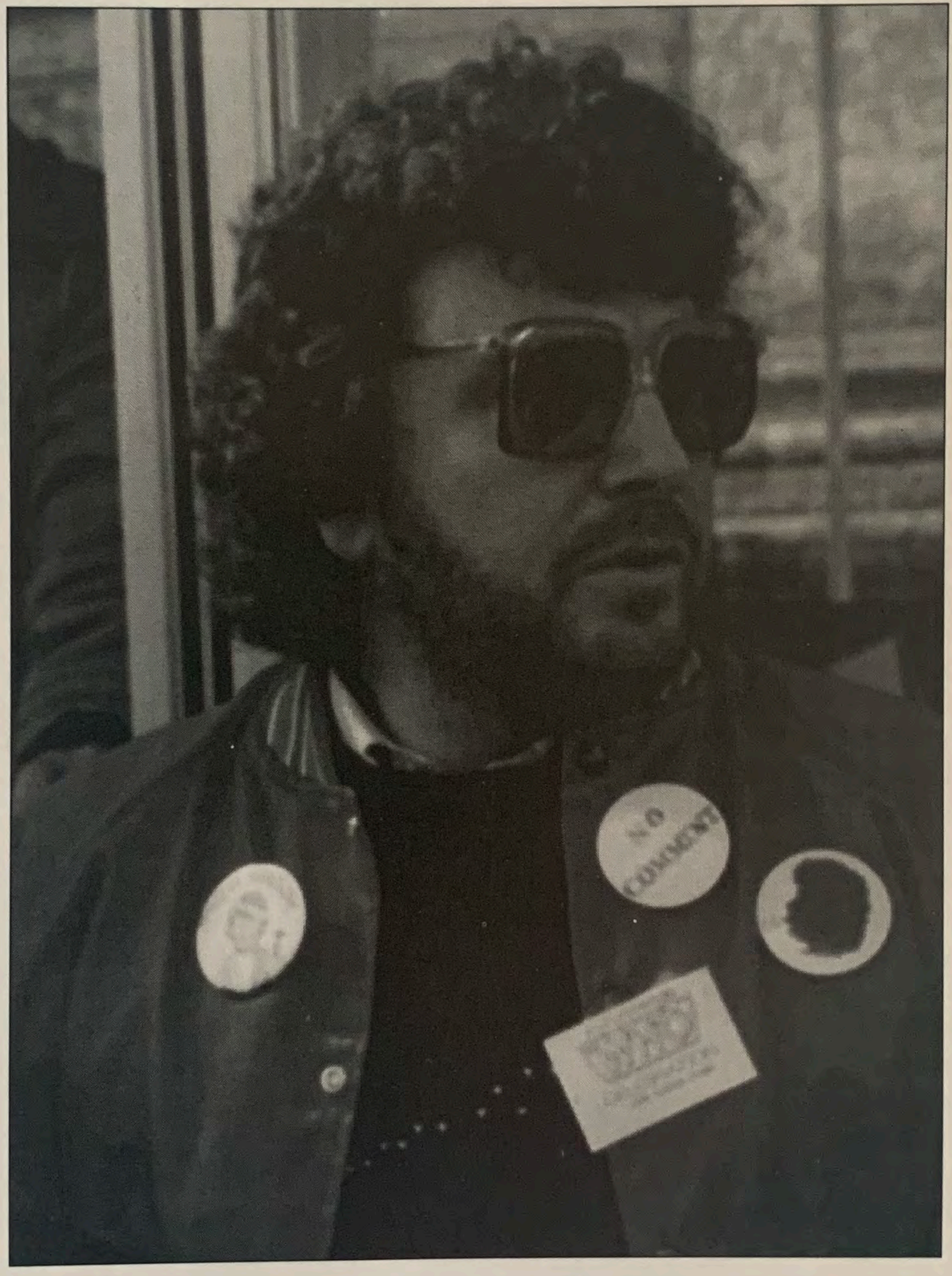
In 1993 I was back playing aliens from outer space in Derek Jarman's Wittgenstein, in which I was a green Martian. However, I was a happy, philosophizing chap and not at all threatening. A sort of Dr. Jekyll to Sil's Mr. Hyde!

Throughout 1993, I concentrated more on writing (e.g. some poems and film and tv scripts). I have also been working on a historical novel called Ivarr the Boneless, which is about a disabled Viking who conquered huge chunks of England in 865 AD. - ***Nabil Shaban, January 1994***

1980 **the producers** 1989

John Nathan-Turner

"No show that keeps getting publicity like that can ever get the chop" - 28th August 1984



"I WAS production unit manager for three years and during that time I worked on three seasons of DOCTOR WHO, two and a half series of ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL and a series of FLESH AND BLOOD. I watched some of the early Hartnells and Troughtons, and then I lost touch with it for quite a long while because I went into the theatre. I think that the beauty of the show is that each era is interesting in its own way. I wasn't mad about the Pertwee era, when everything was set on Earth, simply because I think a science fiction programme automatically requires journeys to other planets. As regards a favourite era, I don't really have one because I think they're all so very different.

As a new producer I wasn't given any brief whatsoever. I was just told to produce the show and do the best I could. When I took over I thought three years would be a nice time to stay, I could achieve something and then it would be time to move on to something else, but it's now become very much a part of my life and a part of my life which I thoroughly enjoy.

Also pressure from the various heads of department there have been over the years and pressure on them from the Controller in that they're reasonably happy with what I'm doing. I think there possibly is a danger of becoming stale, that's true, but with regards to that finishing the show I think is absolute nonsense. I mean, the show is so successful now, it's more successful than it's ever been. It produces a lot of revenue for the Corporation in terms of exhibitions, merchandising, novelisations, many other books, not to mention the foreign sales. It has a healthy audience in this country and I don't think there are any plans whatsoever to finish it.

With regard to the stagnation aspect, I think the show's success relies a great deal on new talent and, as I am staying longer than originally intended - and after all, Barry Letts did five years as well - I have brought in a lot of new directors and writers to the show. I think I am relying a great deal on writers to be innovative in their concepts, rather than in the past where the script editor and I have tended to dictate stories more. Within the design side of the Corporation there is a welter of talent as yet untapped - new designers, costume designers, make-up designers and visual effects designers - which I am very keen to introduce to the show for that very reason, so that it doesn't become predictable and there is a constant flow of new talent.

I've been asked to stay for another year and I'm considering it. With regard to my long-term future, some of the projects that I'm working on, should they take off, then obviously I'll be torn between a show I love and one that I've devised myself, so that's a problem one's got to face. I don't think it will be hard to break away from DOCTOR WHO, really, because my interest has never waned in all areas of drama. I mean, I am part of the Drama Department, and although I've worked a substantial part of my life now on a science-fiction show, I don't think that prevents me from dipping back into something more everyday, shall we say.

I FELT Peter (*Davison*) could have done at least one more year without running the risk of becoming typecast, but three he considers to be his lucky number. He'd done three ALL CREATURES, three of SINK OF SWIM, three HOLDING THE FORTS and felt he should go onto something else. I was disappointed, yes, and in fact we had set a deadline at which Peter had to let me know and we moved that deadline three times to give him more time to think about it. I don't think anyone was more surprised than I - I felt sure he'd say Yes!

I think, always, the character of the Doctor as portrayed by a different actor keeps developing. We did have plans, but if you are going to ask me what they were I think that's silly to reveal because it's not applicable anymore. I know that Peter felt he'd got into his stride in that third season and it would have been nice to have consolidated that characterisation. I don't think it's true that Peter didn't gell with American taste. No, there's no attempt to create a popular stereotype, what a bizarre idea! When you are casting a Doctor you have to cast against what has gone before. If you'd followed Tom with Colin I think, inevitably, people would have compared them, whereas Peter next to Tom was a terrific contrast, and consequently from Peter we can contrast yet again.

I was very very pleased with *The Caves of Androzani*. I think Graeme Harper did a marvellous job on it. I thought *The Twin Dilemma* was an excellent vehicle for a new Doctor, which is why we did it. I think, in a way, it is foolish to compare them just because they happened to be going out back to back, because *The Twin Dilemma* is a very traditional Doctor Who story - ranting maniac defeated by Doctor. When all is said and done, I think that it was successful in that slot and we wanted a simplistic story in order for the audience to concentrate on the new Doctor.

We found it fustrating that we haven't had set days of the week. The move to twice-weekly was a hugh success, there's no doubt about that, and I consider it a double success that people have got used to different days each year. When the new season will transmit I have no idea at this time. We are getting a new Controller, Michael Grade, who I think joins us next month, and it will be his decision when it is transmitted.

A Controller can inflence the future of any programme of course. You are talking constantly about criticisms about America and so on. I think one positive side of America is that Michael Grade has been in Los Angeles for the last couple of years where Doctor Who transmits so I'm sure he's aware of it and the popularity, and I think people are worrying unnecessarily about the future of the show as I have said earlier. There will definitely be a Doctor Who season next year, that's already guaranteed.

THERE'S no reason not to use any old writers if they do come up with a good idea. Bob came up with a super idea for *Caves* and came up with another super script for *The Two Doctors*, which was something we asked him to write. No, there's no reason why not at all. I don't say I was totally against a lot of new writers to give it a fresh breath of life. Now that we've established our house-style, there's no reason not to consult old writers if they're willing to contribute to the show.

> *"I abhor American glossy sci-fi series, and there is no attempt whatsoever to Americanise Doctor Who. You upset me to say that. There's no substitute for good production values . . . There's no attempt to make it a kind of 'lip-gloss' Dallas in space"*

I think if one used only writers who are guaranteed to make good television this industry would stagnate. I think it's essential to mix old established writers with new, innovative writers. I think Chris Bailey, for instance, has written two smashing off-beat stories for Doctor Who. Now, if we didn't look for new writers we'd never have discovered him. Similarly, Eric Saward wouldn't be my script editor if we hadn't, during Chris Bidmead's reign, looked for new writers.

I have approached some old directors, including the late Douglas Camfield, to come back to the show. They have either not been free or not been willing or preferred, at that time, to concentrate on something new. In Douglas's case he wasn't happy to come back to a show on which he'd worked for such a long time, just in case he got labelled again 'the science-fiction director'.

CAN you honestly say you liked the costume of Omega in *The Three Doctors*? I think, in a way, perhaps the nostalgia of the fans sometimes overwhelms them and they assume we are going to bring the Sea Devils back in string vests! To me that doesn't make, nowadays, a good visual design, although it was a very strong and very striking one. Nobody seemed to complain about us updating the Cybermen; people seem to think that was very popular. I think we attempt to retain the essence of the design of the original but take a free hand in updating it to 1984.

We sometimes do try to get the original actors to recreate their roles but, more often than not, they're not available. For instance, Michael Wisher I wanted to play Davros in *Resurrection of the Daleks* but he was doing a very long theatre tour. As regards the original writer, I don't necessarily think that that's always a good idea. We might get a situation where the originating writer is not interested in the show, and they perhaps haven't seen the show lately so it means that we have to send them cassettes. I don't see that we should stifle newer talent when a writer like Johnny Byrne comes up with an idea for the Sea Devils. I don't see then that we can morally go back to the originating writer.

I think there is, occasionally, a preoccupation with what is established in the show. I've always said that we would adhere to continuity unless there was a good enough story or a good enough reason not to. I don't think that everything has to be spelt out. I remember people saying, when we brought Jaqueline Hill back to play Lexa in *Meglos*, why didn't the Doctor say 'Don't I recognise you?', or, 'You remind me of somebody I used to know'. What is the point of that reference which would only make an impact on the die-hard fans of the series and go totally over the heads of the millions of viewers? I don't think it always has to be spelt out, besides, it would deprive fans of speculating.

I ABHOR American glossy sci-fi series, and there is *no* attempt whatsoever to Americanise Doctor Who. It upsets me to hear people say that. There's no substitute for good production values, and if you're saying that the sets and the costumes look better now than they did a few years ago I accept that, but there's no attempt to make it a kind of 'lip-gloss Dallas in space'. I think our stories, on the whole, are far more interesting than the kind of stuff Buck Rogers produces.

I think it *was* a little strange that all the stars were in America on the twentieth aniversary, but nobody had come up with a proposition for this country. I want to make it absolutely clear that conventions in America, on the whole, are fee-paying. They are run by businessmen as opposed to fans, and consequently you can't blame any actor for accepting work, whether it's in the States or whether it's in this country. If an American businessman says, 'Can I contract you to appear in Chicago for a certain weekend?', there's nothing you can do or I can do or anyone can do to prevent them accepting it, whereas in this country conventions are organised by fan groups.

I think it's terrific that production personnel and artists past and present go to conventions here because they're usually giving up their day off, certainly for the current stars. You can't blame them for accepting money rather than doing something out of their own pocket. Where the level of criticism towards the actors is unfair is that if an actor can't go to a convention in this country because they're opening a series of Barrett homes, nobody says a word. I think, because it is a convention, there's a little unfair jelousy over it , more jelousy towards that than the Barrett homes. I'll certainly suggest to the Americans that they try to avoid their dates clashing with the British events.

I feel sure that both Philip (*Hinchcliffe*) and Graham (*Williams*) would go to America if asked. I've no idea whether they're asked or not. I'm not attempting to take any of their credit, I wouldn't dream of doing so. There is a preoccupation, inevitably, in America, just as there is here, with what's coming up, and also, I suppose, the Davisons are starting to go out there. They like him enormously.

We make for the home-market. We're absolutely thrilled that the show is a success, not just in America but in Australia, New Zealand and all the many other countries that we're shown in. I think that what appeals to the Americans most is the very English nature of the show, so to pander to them, to 'Americanize' it - which God forbid I don't think the audience in the UK would like at all - would not do anything to endear us to the Americans. It's true that Americans are notoriously fickle with regard to their interests and so on.

And just to answer the question that an American girl has been cast to pander to them, that is not the reason at all. I mean, you could conversely say that casting Janet Fielding was to pander to the Australians. I found it very difficult to swallow that the Doctor had so many UK girls. Who knows, maybe the next one will be South African, and we don't even transmit in South Africa as far as I know.

IF YOU'RE in a position as producer of a show like Doctor Who there's bound to be a lot of criticism, and conversely there's quite often a lot of praise. I think it's part of the job. If I got upset by it I'd have slashed my wrists years ago. I take the criticism with a pinch of salt and I take the praise with an equal pinch of salt. I think there's a place for fanzines within the world of Doctor Who, of course there is. We issue fan club guidelines and fanzine guidelines (write to this office, we have the fan club and fanzine guidelines here).

I think criticism of any kind is healthy. We'll have an opinion of everything we watch on television, everything we see in the theatre, everything we read in the newspapers. Part of being an adult in this world is to have some kind of critical faculty. I think that the most irritating kind of criticism is destructive criticism. If it's constructive, if people write to me and say 'I hated this story because it was the worst script ever', I don't think that that's constructive, that's just destructive. If they can illustrate *why* - if they think that the dialogue was trite and quote an example, or think the structure of the script required more care - fair enough, but just a sweeping generalisation I find fairly boring and tiresome.

Maybe it should be pointed out that I have had a few letters lately saying they are delighted the anti-JNT campaign is coming to its end, that the negative responses are now being far outweighed by the positive ones. One thing that leapt at me was one person wrote in saying that as a fan of Doctor Who he thought he'd never had it so good in that, during my reign, there has been out of time repeats (which previously had never happened), there has been Longleat (for all its drawbacks - the sad misjudgement of the popularity of the show which resulted in those massive queues and the fact that some people didn't see anything, but at least it happened), and the massive amount of publicity that surrounds the show, and no show that keeps getting publicity like that can ever get the chop. The only other show I can think of which gets repeated publicity like ours is Coronation Street, and look how secure that is as a programme.

I think that there's been more merchandise during the last five years (as I say, I'm not stating these myself, I'm quoting from a letter). I have always had the general viewing public's interests at heart, and I include within that the fans. There is no attempt to pander to the fans. There is an attempt to win audiences and to keep the show being popular." ❑

● **Interviewed by Gary Leigh**

● **Postscript:** *John Nathan-Turner continued to produce Doctor Who up to 1989 when, with viewing figures at their consistently lowest level in the series' history, Doctor Who was put on ice. As one of the last staff producers at the BBC, he was subsequently made redundant, and has since pursued work exploiting Doctor Who's commercial potential.*

1987 **the doctors** 1989

Sylvester McCoy

"The figures are climbing magnificently - the last one was 5.3 million" - **November 1987**

"MY INTEREST in acting started in the box office at the Roundhouse in Chalk Farm, North London, where I was selling tickets. There was another actor there called Brian Murphy (of George and Mildred fame) collecting them too, and one day Ken Campbell — who was up for Doctor Who as well by the way — came in. He was setting up *The Ken Campbell Roadshow* with Bob Hoskins, Dave Hill and Jane Wood, and someone let them down at the last minute and they were after someone desperately and Brian Murphy recommended me to him. So he came up to me in the box office and asked if I wanted to become an actor, and I said 'Yeah!'

It was supposed to be for one night but I stayed with the Roadshow for two years. We toured all over Europe, Britain, Ireland and Israel too, and it became a bit of a cult in the fringe. I left there and went to Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop at Stratford East and worked with her for a while, then I went to Nottingham Playhouse to work with Richard Eyre (the new director of the National Theatre), and I worked with him for two or three years.

***The Greatest Show in the Galaxy* (1988)**

At the same time television started for me. It was about sixteen years ago I started as an actor and about twelve years ago I started Vision On for the BBC, then every year I did another television series; Jigsaw, Eureka, Tiswas, Starstrider... Tiswas was enormous fun, wasn't it? I loved doing that. Sometimes it was very chaotic but it was organised as well. I was the resident lunatic! (The Phantom Flan Flinger was a taxi driver from Birmingham. I've given away the secret now!).

At the same time there was a parallel career going on in the theatre, but because television producers and directors hardly ever go to the theatre and theatre people hardly ever know what is happening on TV (because they are always working), there is very little cross-fertilisation. So I had two careers going on: one in the theatre, which was classical-orientated such as Shakespeare, Beckett, Brecht, and I was having plays written for me by Adrian Mitchell, Ken Campbell and Ken Hill, and I was paying for my mortgage in a sense by doing children's stuff on television. Children are a very honest audience, you can't be patronising to them. In the theatre I've also done children's stuff as well but mostly it's been adult.

I also did The Last Place on Earth, which was a very adult piece for television — seven one-hour films about Scott's race to the Antarctic, which we actually filmed in the Arctic, and *Tiny Revolutions* for Granada, which was an adult film about a professor stuck in prison in Czechoslovakia for telling jokes against the state, which was good fun to do. Two years ago I was in the West End with *Anthony and Cleopatra* and *The Taming of the Shrew* with Timothy Dalton and Vanessa Redgrave, so that was straight, major stuff.

I STARTED watching with Patrick Troughton playing in Doctor Who when I was about twenty-odd, then I watched it with Jon Pertwee and Tom Baker. When I became an actor, because of the nature of the job I got out of the habit of watching series and serials because you can never follow them because you are working. I didn't really see Peter Davison or very much of Colin. For years lots of people said I'd make a really good Doctor Who, then I heard they were looking for a new Doctor but was too late when Colin went up for it (maybe I was lucky). Then, just by luck, I was listening to the news and heard Colin had left, so I phoned up my agent and they said 'The BBC are looking for another Doctor again and you may as well try'. As luck would have it the producer of Eureka phoned immediately after my agent to John Nathan-Turner and said, 'You should see Sylvester McCoy for the

POLICE PUBLIC CALL BOX

Wash day for the TARDIS (1987)

Doctor', and John said, 'Are you in cahoots with his agent?'! I heard there were six thousand people up for it! I didn't want to find out because it would have made me nervous and worried so I had to pretend there was no-one else up for it. It was only later in the Doctor Who office and I saw all those envelopes and they were having to reply saying, 'No, sorry, we've already got our Doctor'.

John came to see me in *The Pied Piper* at The National Theatre, then he invited me for an interview which took about two and a half hours (normally interviews for jobs are only about half an hour so he was obviously quite interested). Then I had to go back for another interview, and that was two or three hours, then I had to go up and see Jonathan Powell and that only took five minutes , thank God! (I can tell you he seems *very* interested. When he launched the new series at BAFTA he said very nice things before the launch and there were hundreds of other things he was launching. He said very nice things about me and he gave it a real good push. He has sent down letters saying how delighted he is with it and he's written things saying that if he didn't like it he would not have put all this money into it. He also said I was the best Doctor Who they have ever had, which I think is perhaps a slight exaggeration, but I don't mind other people exaggerating that on my behalf! He just seems very enthusiastic about it and I know they are very pleased with the viewing figures and have told JNT.)

After I came down, John told me, 'Look, you're my favourite, I want you to do it, but obviously other people have got to have a say and you will most likely have to meet Michael Grade'. He phoned back and said that I had to do a screen test because, although they thought I could do it, they hadn't seen me stand up to an enemy or anything like that. I did the screen test with Janet Fielding in which she played the Iron Lady and I shouted at her. She won! I was delighted when I learned I had got the part. The money is not very good I'll have you know, in fact really quite amazingly little, but I'm told when the overseas sales get going and all that you do earn something, but it will all be a pleasant surprise...

As for the costume, they got the hat from my audition because I wore one exactly like it. I knew I wanted a baggy jacket with lots of paraphanalia in the pockets. I think the Doctor should be something of an Edwardian character, like in those wonderful Jules Verne novels. We wanted something that would not surprise people much if I walked down the street. It was basically a combination of various ideas put forward and I'm really pleased with it.

It all happened so quickly. At the beginning of March I was told I was the Doctor, and at the end of March I was doing it! In between then I had been taken off to Atlanta so there was so little time to do anything! I did manage to see four of the Doctors' stories on tape: *The Three Doctors*, which was the only Patrick Troughton one I saw; then I saw Colin Baker's first one (*The Twin Dilemma*); Tom Baker's one with a statue that was the TARDIS (*The Keeper of Traken*); and Peter Davison's one where they were all running underground somewhere - it was rather good and quite well directed, I thought, the way they made three Cybermen look like twenty-five (*Earthshock*). I literally watched them one after the other so that is why I'm a bit confused.

I felt I would like to bring back a bit of bad-tempered crabiness like William Hartnell but I didn't see any of his on tape, but I remember him. I'd love to go back in time and see for myself all the events which had a dramatic effect in history. I wish we could do some Doctor Whos set in history like in the old black and white days, but JNT says the ratings tend to drop for historical stories so I suppose it won't happen.

There was no pressure on me. I said in my discussion with JNT that I wanted to be a very Troughton-esque type of Doctor and have the contrast between comedy and the seriousness. (I'd have loved to have met Patrick Troughton; I think every fan has a fond place for their first Doctor, it's like your first love. I really am sad that he died before I met him. I'd be really interested to work with Tom Baker and I'd like to work with Jon. We'll have to do another *Five Doctors*!).

JNT accepted that, but there was one time where he came in and said it was too comedic in the first rehearsal. I think the first story was a learning process for all of us because it wasn't written for me, it was written for an unknown Doctor and by people who had only written for Colin, and some of the lines are just pure Colin's lines - you can *hear* Colin saying them!

I tend to be a jokey person myself and tend not to take things too seriously. I know I worried some of the American fans when I first arrived there because I joked about the thing all over the place and they thought the show would as a result be a comedy half hour! I just wanted to make the thing fun, our meeting fun. I do take the thing seriously in my own way but I don't discuss it seriously. I didn't really imagine what it was like and I must say I enjoy it immensely, I love it. I've met lots of the American fans and they are wonderful. I am a very curious human being. I *want* to meet the British fans, but I am told that they are not as kind and gentle and loving as the Americans.

On Season 24...

I don't think *Time and the Rani*'s script was bad, I feel we have a very good team around at the moment. I've always felt that the show could do with a higher budget, but I suppose everyone involved in making any television show feels that way. If they spent more money on Doctor Who I would be more than delighted. Bonnie and I worked together before and I know her on personal terms and I think that must come through, and as I was a new boy to it and she had already done some it was good to arrive with a friend already in the camp. So in those terms it helped me enormously and for that reason I'm very grateful to her.

Richard Briers as the Chief Caretaker (*Paradise Towers*, 1987)

I think Richard Briers'performance (as the Chief Caretaker in *Paradise Towers*) was great. The comedic thing is the policy now from Michael Grade downwards. I don't think it takes away the credibility — I believe, towards the end of Tom Baker's reign, there was a lot of comedy in it and then it was changed. It might go a little too far in one way or another but that is what we have got to find out and to experiment with. I'm brand new, we have a brand new script editor and our job is to take away some of the violent aspects of it. As I say the scripts were written for another Doctor or an unknown Doctor and because of the sequence of events they had to have it written months before I came along, so in a way things were not quite right.

The thing is, the first viewing figure was 5.1 million, then it dropped to 4.3, then 4.9 and it's climbing all the way back up again. Everyone expected too much because of background circumstances to it. Maybe it would have been better with a different person in the role in that story than I. It was not written for me but even then they knew what kind of season to go for. It is a period of change, and if people didn't like it I think it would be for that reason. I'm not going to knock it anyway. I think *Delta and the Bannermen* is a very good story. The viewing figures are climbing and I think that if the programme doesn't come up to scratch for these people then they should switch over and watch CORONATION STREET instead!

I KNEW there would be criticism of me taking over because I remember other Doctors too were initially criticised. I've only seen Nina Myskow's thing on OPEN AIR. The presenter, Patti Caldwell, said she didn't like DOCTOR WHO and has never liked it but she thought the new guy was quite good, which is me. She got very frustrated when she couldn't get anyone on the phone that would knock it, which was great for us. Nina Myskow is a lady who can string words together and is trying to make a name for herself and has decided that what she is going to do is knock things. It's so pathetic. It doesn't bother me one iota, she just does it because she can't do what we can do. She has decided that she is going to become a celebrity and she has sat down and thought, 'What have I got to make myself a celebrity?' She has very little except an ability to write for a newspaper, so she could either write wonderfully and beautifully like James Cameron, but she hasn't got the talent to do that so she has decided to knock people and become famous that way. I don't read those papers so therefore it doesn't bother me. The letters I've had from people generally have been 100% in favour, much to my surprise, because I was expecting people to write in and say, 'I don't like what you are doing'. So that is really nice, and they are the important people — not what's-her-name Nina Mouskouri (*sic*).

SING CHEMIS
R COLOUR FILMS

Hale and Pace joined the Doctor and Ace in *Survival*, the final televised BBC-produced adventure (1989)

The 'professional fans' (i.e. the DWAS) are people whose main preoccupation is analysing the series. The ordinary viewers seem to like it very much. I was criticised by these so-called fans before I'd even got to the first rehearsal for being an 'unknown', but I'd like to say I'd done a lot of theatre and at least one television series a year so I was by no means an unknown in television terms, so how they could attack me for that before they had even seen me play the Doctor is beyond me. Then there was that fellow (*Andrew Beech*) who wrote that stinging article in *The Daily Mail* - I think they should rename their society the DWCS - the DOCTOR WHO Critics Society! I don't know what I've done to upset anybody. I took time out from my busy schedule and had my photo taken with them in the studio, answered their letters and queries, and this man turns out to be an amazing hypocrite. He writes the thing in complete ignorance because the whole story hadn't been shown —just the first episode. When you play a character it has to evolve; the direction you take at the beginning isn't necessarily the one that you are going to pursue. I think he should have had the courtesy and the kindness to wait until it had finished before he sold the story to *The Daily Mail*.

I've had thousands of letters from ordinary people and they seem to love it and they have made it all worthwhile. The ordinary people are the ones I care about. The figures are climbing magnificently - the last one was 5.3m! The BBC are very pleased with the figures having placed it against CORONATION STREET. The professional fans have so far been very unkind to me and I can't find any kindness towards them. There are so many criticisms flying around. I've not read any of it, it just gets back to me that the show

Sylvester joined Colin Baker, Peter Davison and Jon Pertwee in April 1993 for a 30th anniversary video promotion

is being knocked. I've tried to do all the interviews and answer all their questions, so I'm not really enamoured at the moment with these people. I think there should be a separate fan club for the critics - the present one defies the Trade's Descriptions Act!

I am an actor and showbusiness is a hard old business. I've been on the edge of lots of things that have disappeared and you get used to lots of hurts. I am lucky in a sense that it happened to one of my predecessors. If I'd have come in, as Colin did, totally unaware of the possibility of something like that happening, I'd get hurt, but now I know there is that possibility. If it happens, I'll think 'showbusiness' and get on with something else. I feel sad for Colin, that he was the one that found out that there was the possibility you could get the elbow.

JNT as a producer is fine. He's had memos saying that the BBC is very, very happy with the way the viewing figures are going. I think he's very optimistic; he had said he'd had enough as producer, but since we've started working together he's liked it so much he wants to stay and continue the working relationship. The BBC have decided to continue it next year so that is good news. They've just got a new head of BBC1 so decisions change all the time. I have signed to do it for three years. If, after that they are enthusiastic to do some more, I would consider it. It's so far away at the moment I'm not thinking about it too much.

I would like to say that I've been lucky enough to be chosen as the seventh Doctor and I'm enjoying it very much. However, I would urge those so-called fans who are criticising it heavily to be less critical of the show, as they are only arming the guns of those people who would like to get rid of it, and far from saving it they just might be putting the final nail in the coffin lid..." ❑

● **Interviewed by Robert Cope and Gary Leigh**

● **Postscript:** *After two further seasons in the role, Sylvester McCoy's Doctor continues in Virgin's NEW ADVENTURES and Marvel UK's DOCTOR WHO Magazine comic strip. Meanwhile, Sylvester himself has continued to be engaged by the BBC in children's-orientated programmes, including two series of WHAT'S YOUR STORY?, an edition of the school's programme SEARCH OUT SCIENCE as the Doctor - in which he was accompanied by Sophie Aldred and K9 - and the CHILDREN IN NEED charity skit Dimensions in Time. He has also been involved with the fan-produced video productions of The Airzone Solution and his entry into the MythMakers library. On stage he has been a regular in pantomime as well as appearing on tour in Having a Ball (in which he appeared naked for most of the play's duration), the ill-fated Temptation and The Invisible Man, in which he played the narrator. Sylvester is no longer officially recognised by the BBC as the 'current' Doctor, and it is unlikely that he will resume the role in which ever guise it adopts on its return...*

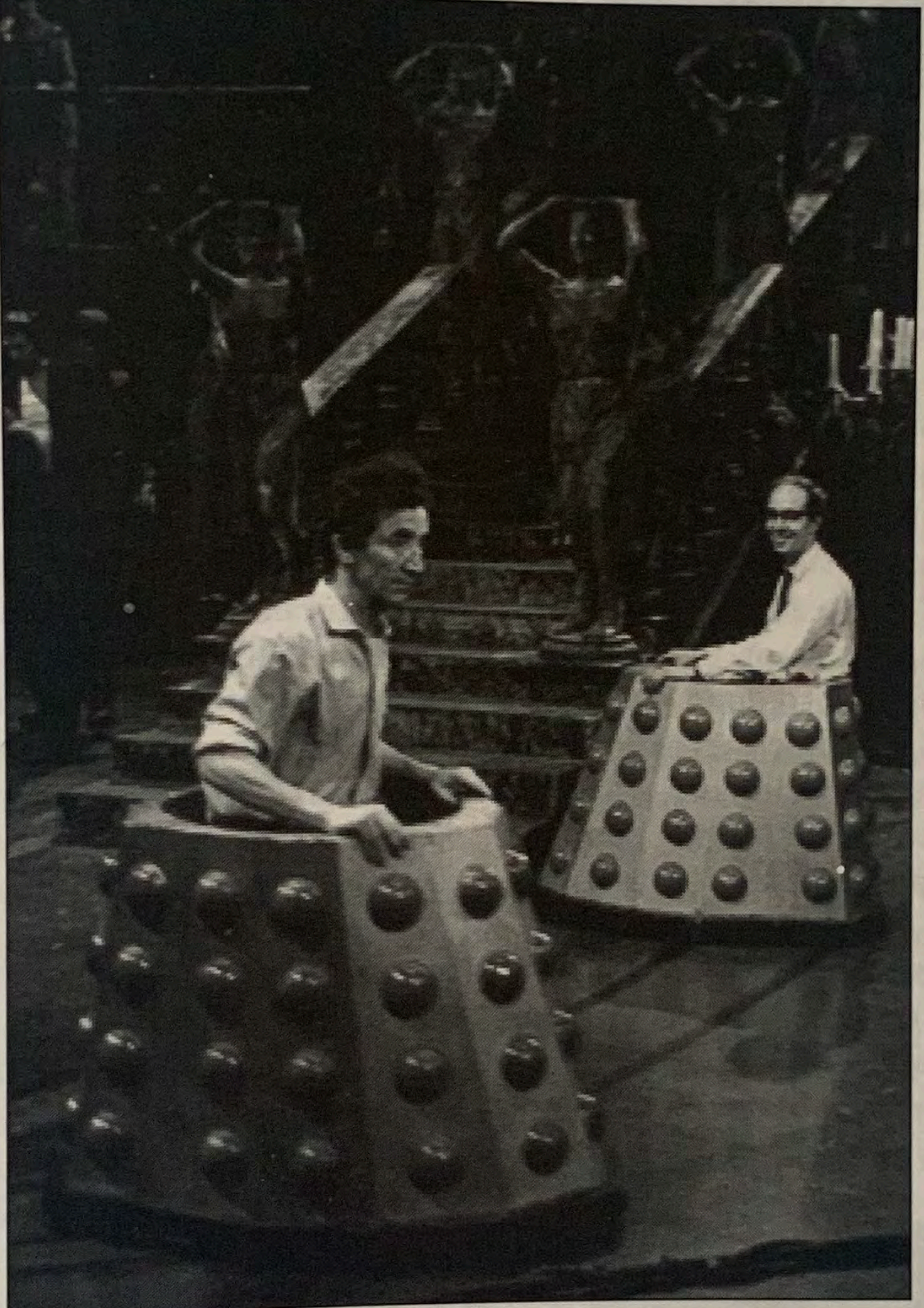
As the Pied Piper at The National Theatre (1987)

1965 **the monsters** 1988

John Scott-Martin

"Even on a studio floor the tiniest twig can cause chaos" - May 1988

"I SORT OF fell into acting in a way. As a child I was always interested in singing, and as I became older I got interested in amateur opera and amateur dramatics. In 1944 I joined The Gordon Highlanders at the age of eighteen and I served for three-and-a-half years. After that the chance of a job came along in panto. They wanted a tenor and somebody who could understudy a part in a show, and I went along and hey presto I was in. That panto ran for twelve weeks and of course I couldn't then go back to an ordinary mundane day job, so at the age of twenty-four I travelled down to London for a part in a show. I went on a tour with a musical, then a panto the next year and then a tour with *Kismet*, which was a lovely show to do. It was great to see all the big cities and to be working all the time. *Kismet* came back to London and reopened in the Shaftesbury Theatre but it didn't last very long because it was a very hot summer, so I went into a summer season in Norfolk.



John Scott-Martin and Gerald Taylor (*The Chase*, 1965)

It was the Fifties when a lot of TV was suddenly taking place. Commercial TV was growing fast and there was so much live TV - far more than there is now - and a lot of work around. As a jobbing actor I took whatever work came along in films and TV - I've always said I'll do anything from alcoholics to archbishops! I did Emergency Ward 10, The Good Life, Softly, Softly...there were so many series. Naturally I met many different directors, and eventually Richard Martin - who I was doing a Z Cars for - one day said he was looking for somebody to play a Zarbi in Doctor Who. For some reason one of the original team of monster actors had dropped out and he needed to do it straight away and I said, 'Of course, I'll be *anything*!' I hadn't actually watched a lot of Doctor Who by then because Saturday afternoon for me was inconvenient.

The first time I met the cast was in the rehearsal room opposite White City tube station. Bill Hartnell was perhaps a bit distant, but he was getting on and he wasn't well, particularly towards the end. From Patrick Troughton onwards we were treated very well. In those days you rehearsed a week and you did it and then you went on to something else. Every night was a first night and every night was a last night. You'd finish the job and wonder what you would be doing the week after, if anything.

It was virtually live telly in those days and we had about an hour and a half to record the twenty-five minutes worth. You met on Monday and started rehearsing and by the following Friday evening you were in the studio and they used to go out a fortnight after on Saturday. We would still be recording the same story as the early episodes went on the air. It wasn't really hard work because it was written with that routine in mind. For example, in *The Web Planet* (*1965*) if Kevin (*Manser*) - who I already knew because we had the same agent - or myself was playing a scene and we had to change our costume, the script would have a couple of scenes duration long enough for me to get around the back of the set to change. It was almost like live TV in that respect.

It was an ambitious story but they'd spent a lot of time and a lot of money on it. The ratings were good but the Zarbis were terrible to handle. I always remember it as standing in a metal locker - the type you get at swimming baths - with your feet through a hole in the bottom and then lifting it up and walking around. They were *very* heavy, and the biggest snag was that the tail and the body had been bolted on to you. You couldn't stand upright because the tail was longer than you were tall, so the only way you could have any rest and stand aloft was to stand on a block (which we called 'Zarbi blocks') of wood so your tail could touch the floor. To be able to stand upright for two minutes was *bliss*! On one occasion I remember nearing the end of recording and thinking, 'I have just got to stand upright before my back finally goes'. As I was on a rostrum I edged near the end of the set, tucked my tail over the edge, stood upright and went right over backwards and landed like a beetle on its back on the floor with my legs in the air! Recording was stopped and people came rushing over shouting 'Are you alright!' I calmly replied 'Yes, I am happy - I am comfortable for the first time in six weeks!' They were a difficult thing to do but, like all the monsters, you had to believe in what you were doing. If you play it with conviction then it makes sense to the other people around you.

You were always thinking what could you do with this body in this situation. Could you make it look as if it was alive? Could you

***The Web Planet*, 1965**

tilt its head to make it look as if it was listening? The same thing happened with the Daleks of course; you tended to sit in them and make the things pulsate and vibrate a bit, almost like a police dog that's told to sit but it's not a stone - it sits and it's still alive and taking in what's going on around it. You are then at the mercy of the people making the costumes and how the director shoots it, because you might be acting your socks off but if he's not going to be looking at you at the time then it's gone out of the window.

After *The Web Planet* Richard Martin said, 'We're now going to do another story and this time it's Daleks'. I'd seen them and heard people chatting about them so it was nice to be in on the bandwagon in a way. Kevin, Robert and Gerry (*Taylor*) had done the Daleks before and they said, 'Come and join us, it will be great fun!', and so we formed a sort of quartet like the Inkspots and we stuck together for ages. They obviously knew what they were doing and were several steps ahead of me, and I suppose, for the first couple of days, I did the easier stuff.

The first thing I did as a Dalek (*The Chase*) was some filming and then studio. Bob was usually the tough one involved in the long chases. He was a keep-fit fanatic and heavier than we were. You weren't choreographed as such and there wasn't a specific way in which we were told to move them but you realised, for example, that even when you were in a background scene you weren't going to sit there looking like a post box. You were going to move the eye stalk or whatever to show it was alive. You had to learn the lines as well. According to the scene, Peter Hawkins or Roy Skelton would either wait for your light to go or you would wait for them to start speaking, but it would depend on the scene. You heard the voice and you more or less played it as if you were doing it. Even when I meet Roy today I say to him, 'How am I?!'

It was pantomime time. It wasn't a very serious one and we even landed on the Marie Celeste at one stage. It was a bit of a romp. There was a lovely scene on the top of the Empire State Building. The Mechonoids were twice as big and we doubled on those and had some extra lads come in to do some of the fight sequences at the end. In fact, on a couple of occasions, two of us would get into a Mechonoid body because they were rather big and heavy to lumber about. They were about as wide as a rowing boat and we sat inside them and operated them rather like a Dalek. I think they were probably too near in concept to the Daleks, who were already established, and there wasn't enough room for them to take off in popularity as well.

AS FOR the second Dalek film, from what I remember they were not offering us the normal actors' filming wages. It's very hard to say what a normal actor's filming wage is. Each actor is an individual and he or his agent will negotiate what he is going to be paid for the job. Gordon Flemyng sort of intimated that he thought the Dalek operators weren't as important as the actors and he was going to offer to pay us a lot less then he'd paid in the first film. We felt we didn't want to be demoted in this way so we told him we weren't going to do it. Bob then managed to negotiate a better rate for himself in return for teaching the new cheap-rate operators brought in by Aaru, but that was his business.

Mission To The Unknown...

They were trying to change the tone of one of these strange being's voices with somebody slapping him on the back as he spoke, rather like a massage, to get the rhythm.

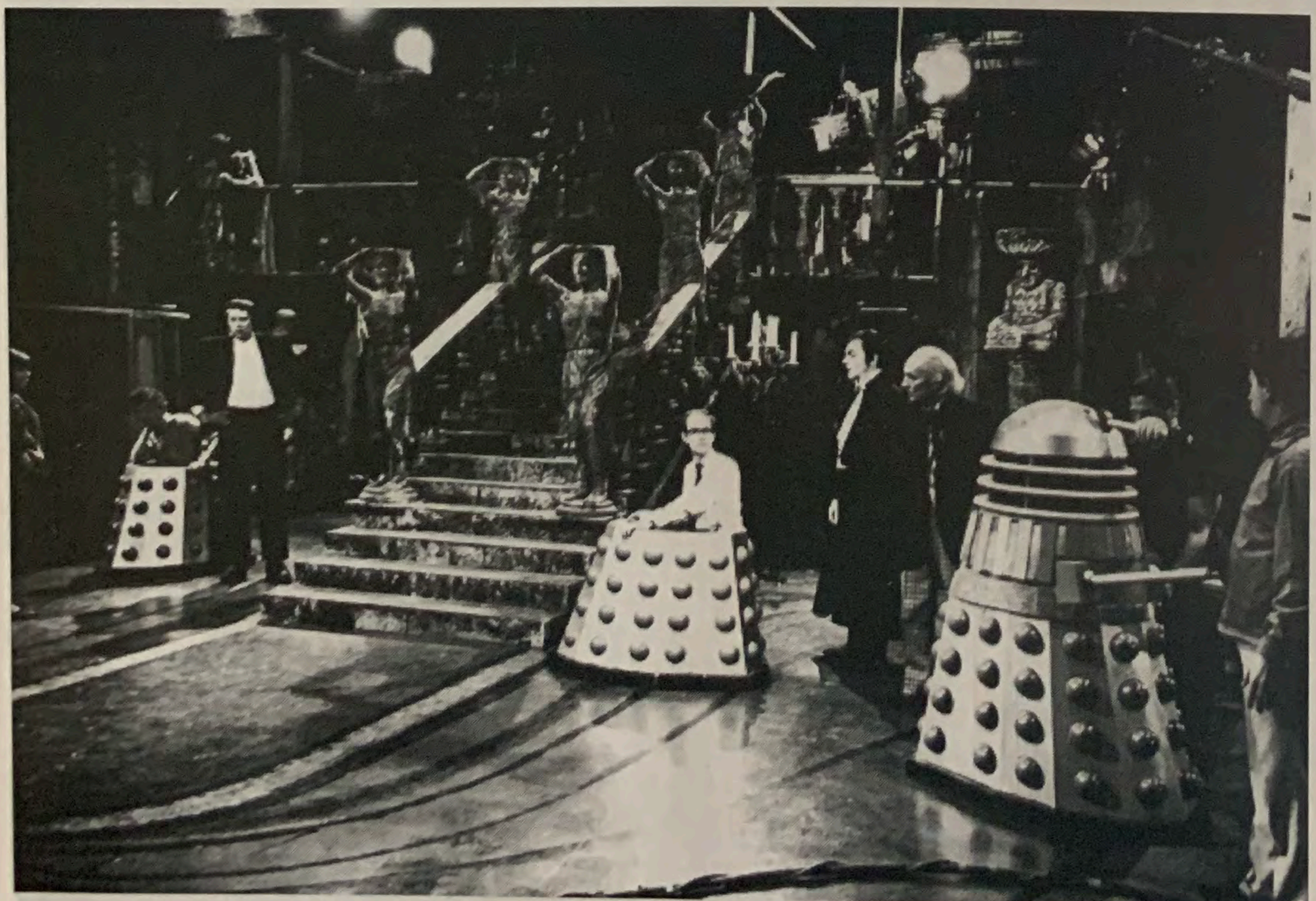
...and The Daleks' Master Plan...

Twelve weeks was a long time but I didn't mind - I was pleased to be working because I was recently married with a new house.

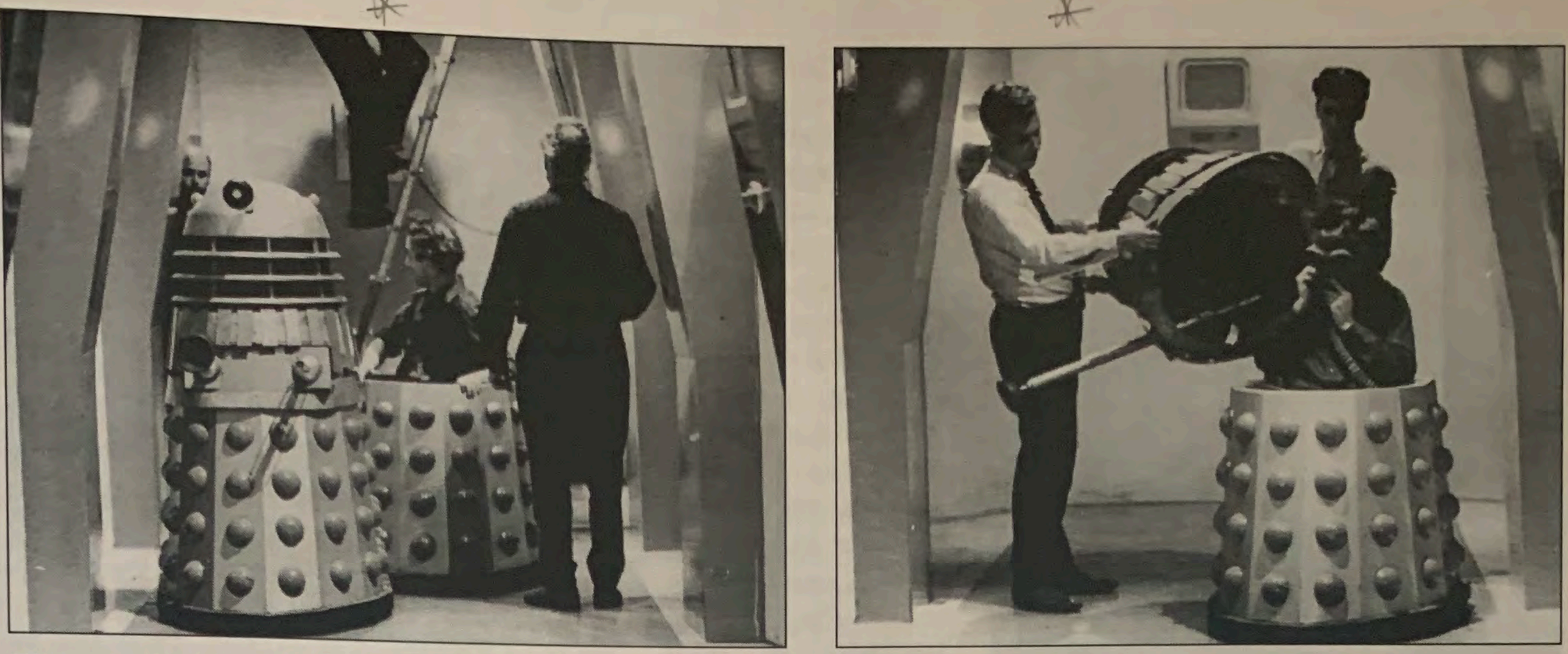
It's funny, because by the time you got to episode ten you suddenly thought, 'Good Lord, we're going to finish any episode now!' When you settle in to a twelve-parter it's like doing a twelve-week show on the stage and you feel as though it will last forever. The money's rolling in and security's here, but before you know where you are you're past the peak and you're running down the hill thinking, 'Oh gosh, only two more wage packets and you're out again!'

I only did two Dalek stories with Pat, but I did do other shows with him. He was great. I loved the idea of him playing his flute - the serious way he would go about things and yet still you'd think there was a twinkle beneath the Doctor's heavy exterior. I wouldn't say it was dead easy for Patrick but he'd done plenty of drama, Shakespeare and films, you couldn't surprise him with anything. I didn't honestly think he was going to stay as long as he did because of all the work he had done. I thought he was bound to want to toddle off and do something else.

I think Gerald Taylor played the Dalek for his first two episodes, the rest of us were just commissioned for four episodes (*The Power of the Daleks, 1966*). Kevin Manser



Maureen O'Brien (Vicki), William Hartnell and assorted nasties on the haunted house set *(The Chase, 1965)*



Director Christopher Barry gives instructions for the 'exploding Daleks' sequence, as John Scott Martin dons a gas mask (*The Power of the Daleks*, 1966)

and myself had to hurtle down a corridor and hit each other, which was supposed to result in lots of smoke and little firework explosions going on all around. They gave us each a mask with a rubber tube which came out of the bottom of the Dalek so that we could breath and to stop us from coughing and spluttering. In theory that was smashing but in practice it didn't work because all the smoke went up the tube and you were just inhaling pure smoke instead of mucky smoke. So we hurtled down this corridor and crashed into each other with these explosions going on, which were far too big, and the studio fireman rushed in and got Kevin and myself out and a stray spark had melted the back of his nylon shirt. We were dragged out, it was *utter* chaos going on, and the director, Christopher Barry, then calmly said, when we'd recovered, 'Right we'll do it again. Take two'!

Although the second story (*The Evil of the Daleks, 1967*) ended with the supposed destruction of the Dalek race, I never for one moment thought it was the end because you knew that in time and space you could go backwards and forwards. Even if all the Daleks were destroyed now you could pick up a story next year which happened before this time. Peter Murphy (a.k.a. Murphy Grumbar), who was an operator in the first two Dalek stories, had disappeared for a while and popped up from nowhere in his little red motor. We always used to let each other know if there was one coming up and we'd say, 'Make sure you're available'. I only lost one (*Destiny of the Daleks, 1979*) because I couldn't go away for the filming in Devon or somewhere. I wanted to do it but I was in *Oliver!* in the West End at the time and the management made it a condition of the contract that I wouldn't go out of London. I could have done the studio work.

Colony In Space (1971)...

I think it was a case of 'We've got a cumbersome looking monster - let's get one of the Dalek boys in to do it'. I'd mainly just played a Dalek up to then, but then I got on to the rollcall as a regular monster so I must have done the job reasonably well. They don't have a lot of time in rehearsal and they have to get on with it, so if they know you can do it they would sooner use the same person.

Day of the Daleks (1972)...

I was the Gold Dalek, which was an attempt to make it look good in colour. I was the lead Dalek by then because the others had gone their own ways. Cy Town actually came in on BLUE PETER because they needed two Daleks for some publicity thing and Cy happened to be working for the same agent as myself. Cy came down to the studio half an hour before we had to do it and I showed him what to do, and he's stayed ever since!

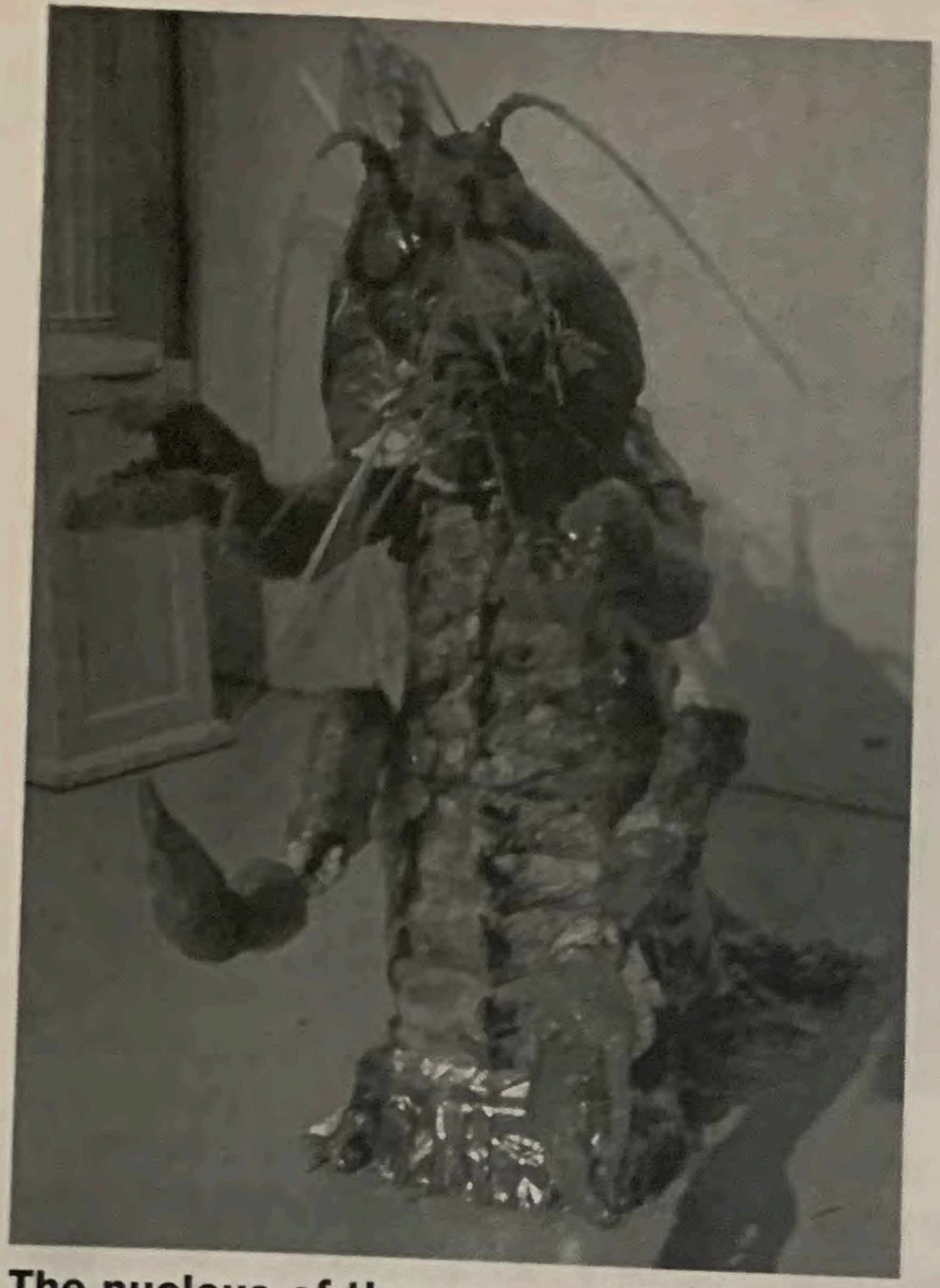
I don't know why Peter Messaline and Oliver Gilbert were booked for the voices for this story. Perhaps they wanted to give youngsters the chance, but I didn't think their voices worked particularly well. I think we had been so used to the perfection of Peter and Roy's voices that anyone coming in was going to be fighting a losing battle. The thing I remember most was trying to push my Dalek over that damn lawn and being blown up here, there and everywhere. In the end I think we had to put boards down because it was terribly hard moving over that sort of terrain. Even on a studio floor the tiniest twig can cause chaos!

The Mutants...

London was suffering with blackouts and power strikes at the time and we went down Chiselhurst Caves using our own lights and generators, but when they stopped we had to rely on the local supply. We were all down there on several occasions when the lights went out. The Mutt costume was a sort of odd relation to the Zarbi in a way in that it was a fibre-glass, insect-like creature. I can remember being blown to smithereens, but then I was *always* being blown up! I returned as a Mutt briefly in Tom Baker's time (*The Brain of Morbius, 1976*).

Jon and Katy were great together. Jon was very much the extrovert at all times; when he was performing he was always on top of his trade and always very quick and willing to give credit to the rest of the crew on the show, which was nice, but *he* was the star of the show.

On location for *The Day of the Daleks* (1972)



The nucleus of the swarm (*The Invisible Enemy*, 1977)

Frontier in Space (1973)...

Yet another quarry! We always seemed to be in sandpits or quarries miles from anywhere. Roger Delgado was a *very* nice bloke, a very serious, straight, actor and a very talented man. We were all so sorry to lose him not long after. He was one of those actors who, because he was so well known and liked, you felt you knew him even though you'd never met.

I remember at Lime Grove once, on a 6 o'clock news programme, Jon Pertwee was chatting away about a book of his. They had me hidden around the back and then I trundled on shouting, '*Exterminate*! *Exterminate*!', and he said 'That's John Scott Martin in there, I'm sure it is. We'll have a beer afterwards!' Then he took the lid off in view of millions of people and I was exposed for the first time!

Planet of the Daleks...

That was very much a special effects story. You had to wait for hours and hours while the special effects people were creating the footprints in the sand. Tony Starr came straight in on *Planet of the Daleks* as the Dalek Supreme, which might sound like jumping rank but he didn't really have as much to do as the rest of us.

The make-up supervisor came to the Daleks just before the last run and said, 'Will you sort your make-up out'. Well, of course the Daleks obviously don't need make-up or wardrobe, unbeknown to the supervisor, and suddenly we had all this make-up at our disposal. We got her to turn us into three Dolly Parton-type characters with blonde hairdos, rosebud lips, long eye-lashes and little red cheeks, and we looked great! We even each had a little handbag! We crept round the back of the set, got in our machines without the tops on and suddenly Jon and Katy shouted: 'Look! The Daleks!' The three of us came hurtling through the jungle after them. Roy and Michael Wisher were doing the voices and they immediately camply grated: 'Purs-s-sue! Purs-s-sue! Purs-s-sue!', which flattened Jon Pertwee it was so funny! But we had to spend the rest of the night dressed like that, even when we finally recorded it!

The Green Death...

It was nice to be a character for once (*Hughes*), although it was a shame I died after the first episode! I was a bit spoilt on Doctor Who because I was used to being in all six episodes. The make-up was good to get the green death effect. They fitted me with a green latex face mask and when a certain light shone on it it pulsated. I was known as 'Jones the maggot' whenever they wanted me in rehearsal! There was quite a lot of drama and documentary stuff at that time pushing messages across and dramatizing subjects. I think it's difficult to become a social vehicle because if people get used to it they might start looking for something that isn't there.

The UNIT set-up was a crazy situation really. Any army unit with one Brigadier and one sergeant must have been laughable to any old soldier, but it worked nonetheless as a foil for the Doctor and a link with government.

Death to the Daleks (1974)...

In the past, on location you could never get terror into a chase scene because you just couldn't pursue quickly enough. So this time they put the Daleks on the kind of track that cameras are mounted on for speed, and they put wheels on the Daleks to fit the track. This was all very grand except that this made the Daleks higher and meant that we could hardly touch the ground with our feet to move them. You more or less had to tuck your feet up and get someone to push you to get you going, and hope to God you stayed on the right lines. Well, I got a particularly hard push and went careering down the track and toppled off the end and crashed off. Murphy Grumbar did a lovely little speed behind me, and a little voice within his Dalek went 'Ooooooooooh!' and he too shot off the end, to everyone's amusement!

Robot (1974/5)...

It was a big change. We were so used to Jon for such a long time that we didn't know if Tom would work, but there again I suppose we're all frightened of change. They also began pushing the stories forward towards an older audience.

Genesis of the Dalek (1975)...

I remember the first entrance I did when Davros was introducing the first Dalek to a group of scientists. Everything was going wrong; the doors wouldn't open, the ramp wouldn't work, the Dalek was supposed to come down and land in a certain position and we couldn't get it right, we were hitting tables and things were wobbling all over the place. We broke for a coffee break and I got one of the lads in wardrobe to get me a huge feather boa, which he wrapped around my Dalek casing, and one of the lads from sound got me a Shirley Bassey recording of Big Spender. We did the scene again, and Davros said: 'Gentlemen, I present to you...the *Dalek*!' The door slid open and I glided through with my feather boa and the music going 'The moment you walked in the joint...' - I thought they were going to kill me!

The Invisible Enemy (1977)...

That was hell! Again it was fibre-glass and I was kneeling down for a long time. It was like a giant prawn cocktail gone mad! I went to a model-maker's studio somewhere in Highgate and was plastered with sticky tape which was glued to me and then cut off to make a body cast so that when I put it back on it fitted me like a second skin. When I breathed, it breathed - not like the Zarbis where you knew there was a bloke inside. John Leeson did my voice as well as K9's because I couldn't speak in that costume. It was so hot to wear, and it had a gorgeous, huge, articulated tail which I don't think was ever seen on screen, which was a shame.

K9 was *very* difficult. Two chaps were controlling him and there were hours and hours of wasted time trying to get the thing to work. It made a lot of noise.

The Five Doctors (1983)...

The usual procedure for booking me would be for the Production Office to phone my agent and ask if I was available for a certain date. If I was then the secretary or production associate would send me the contract and the script. Doctor Who has led on to lots of other work too because you get to know people all the time.

The anniversary one was very pleasant to do because my old friends came back in again. How the devil we ever got it made I don't know because we wasted so much time reminiscing about the old days! I had just missed working with Carole Ann Ford originally, and here we were together! I think it worked as an end-of-season panto sort of thing, a jolly jape.

Resurrection of the Daleks (1984)...

The Dalek casings by now were very battered and worn out. Mind you, if you'd been blown up for twenty years *you'd* look battered and chipped and worn out! Sure, it doesn't show them to be invincible, but there again it's where they're willing to spread the budget. It was a different programme by then. Peter Davison was perhaps a bit too young for someone with such an old - or certainly very experienced - mind, who's done so much and seen so much. It was an iffy choice, but the whole show was somehow different with Davison. It wasn't the old Doctor Who.

It's possibly a bit more technical now and you don't quite get the 'company' feeling because it's done out of order, whereas in the old days you virtually did it live. You rehearsed it and you *all* went in and did the show from 7.30-9.00pm or 8.30-10.00pm. After the rehearsals for *Remembrance of the Daleks*, for example, some of the artists I never saw again because they were called in to the studio on different days to me. It's almost become like filming in a way.

Revelation of the Daleks (1985)...

Graeme (*Harper*) was great, I'd worked with him when he was an AFM. He ran round on the ceiling, let alone the floor! He had such boundless energy for a young fellow and was great fun to work with.

Remembrance Of The Daleks (1988)...

We have a long-running gag in our family in that my wife and I can never go away on holiday together. For example, last year she had booked a holiday for us to go to France and out of a clear blue sky I got *Fiddler on the Roof* for four months, so she went away with two of her friends instead. This year those same friends wanted us to go to France again and I warned them that although I'd like to go, if any work came my I'd have to take it, so they suggested we book a holiday in Scotland which we did. The day after we'd booked and paid I got a call from my agent for Doctor Who. It was really out of the blue, as a freelance actor you're always at the mercy of the telephone. So the three of them drove off into the sunset and left me to do Doctor Who, which was a surprise in itself to me because I *honestly* didn't think they'd bring the Daleks back again. I thought they'd sort of outstayed their life, but I was pleased nonetheless.

Sophie Aldred was playing one of the daughters in *Fiddler on the Roof* in Manchester, in which I was playing a Rabbi. One day she asked me, 'You've done a lot of Doctor Whos John, haven't you? I'm going to London to be interviewed for a part in Doctor Who, what shall I say?' I said 'Well, be yourself, sell yourself, you've got the talent, away you go'. A couple of weeks later she told me they wanted to see her again but couldn't think why, so she went back to London and we travelled up to Manchester that day together as I'd been home for a weekend. She said, 'They asked me all sorts of things but I don't know. They'll let me know'. I think that was Monday and on the Wednesday we were doing a matinee, and she was on the telephone near the stage door. All of a sudden she leapt out of the telephone box yelling, 'Pencil! Pencil! Pencil! Somebody quick!' Then she ran up to me and threw her arms around me and gasped: 'John! John! John! I've got it! Doctor Who!' I said, 'Oh smashing. How many weeks?', thinking she was going to say four or six, and then she said something like 'Three, with an option of next year!' She was absolutely over the moon. I immediately presented her with a Dalek postcard on which I'd already written 'Welcome to the family...You will now never be exterminated!' (because companions seem to be immune to Dalek gunfire!).

That night on stage, in the sewing machine scene wherein anyone who passed me used to say 'Mazeltov, Rabbi', she passed me this time and gave me such a smile: 'Mazeltov, Rabbi, *Mazeltov*!' I must say the whole company was so pleased that a young lass who was loved by everyone had clicked such a lovely job.

The new cases for the Imperial Daleks were fine. We were literally jumping from one set and fighting with ourselves in another, it was chaotic! Hugh Spight jumped in well and truly because, being quite a fitness fanatic, he handled the more arduous Dalek roles including the Black Dalek. He'd done puppet and model work before so he's quite used to working out of sight of people. As there were at least ten Daleks altogether we had about four extra lads for a couple of days on the filming who usually do walk-on work, like soldiers and guards for example. We just pushed them in and showed them what to do. Cy was the Special Weapons Dalek. It was like a Sherman tank - the biggest, heaviest thing you've ever seen in your life! However, I will say that I don't think the Daleks are as invincible today as we were. In the old days the Dalek would come round the corner and *wallop*, he exterminated you, there was no question. Now we seem to doubt, argue and talk amongst each other and people get the better of us and outwit us, which they never used to do. I mean, more of us get zapped nowadays than we ever did; we were invincible at one time, but we're not anymore.

I had done a Vision On years ago where the four of us went down to Dulwich College and did a Dalek ballet to music on the forecourt. Sylvester said he was in that episode but we never met because we did ours on film and he did his in the studio. I think the kids will like him because he's zany and a bit clownish but he gets the better of authority. He cocks a snoot at anyone who's trying to tell him off and yet he is a character who's got the brains to do it. I feel that the Doctor, as a Time Lord, ought to be all knowledgeable and all powerful, *whatever* skin he happens to be in. There's no reason why the Doctor couldn't come back as either a young boy or even an old woman yet still be the brains of the Doctor. Remember, the power of the show is greater than any one individual actor.

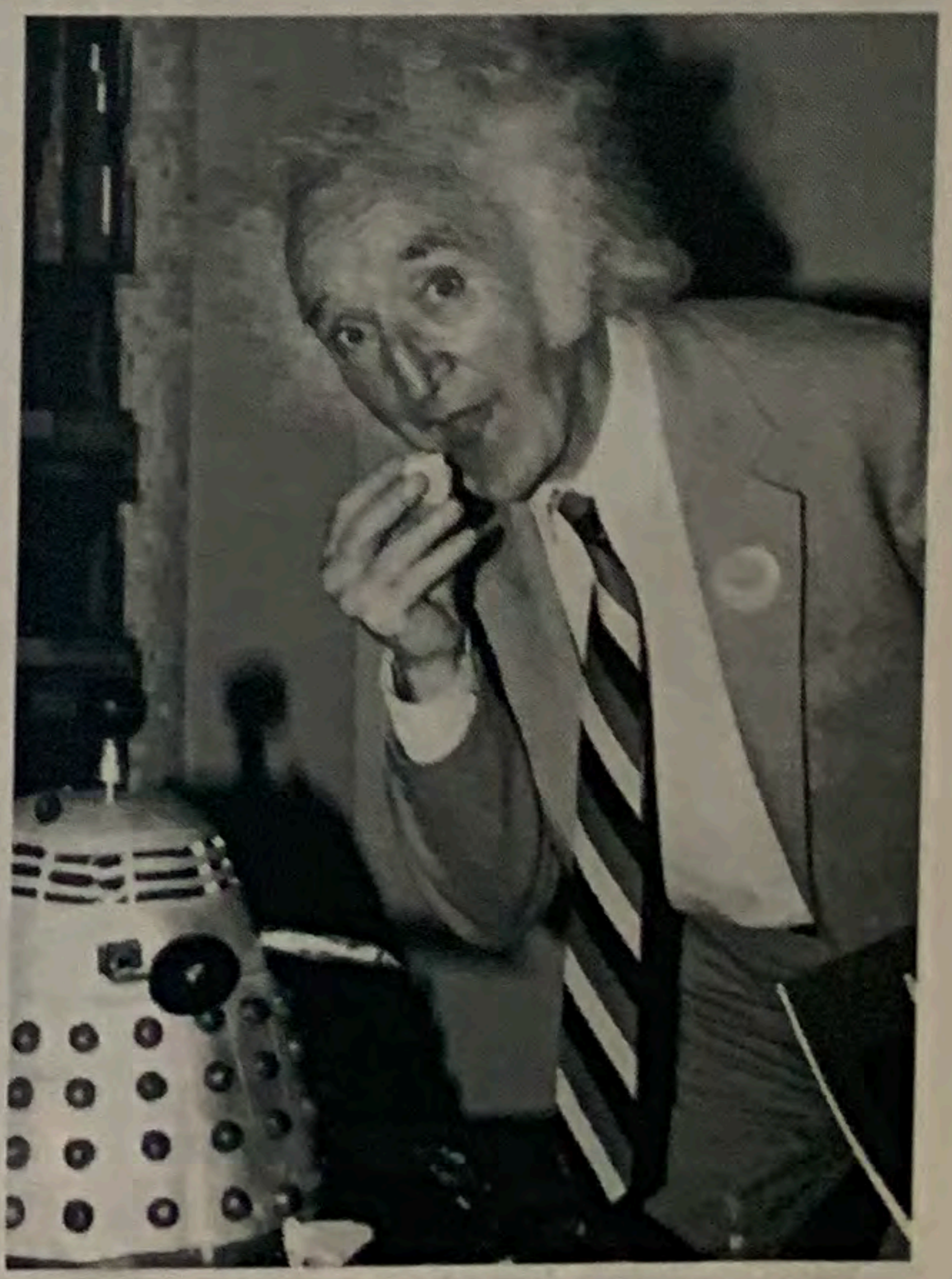
I SUPPOSE I preferred the long-running, earlier ones because it is nice to become part of a company for, say, twelve weeks. In those days we used to meet so often doing two or three a year that you knew *everybody*, including the wardrobe and stage staff.

Memorable moments? I suppose falling over as a Zarbi on my back and finishing up with my legs in the air; Kevin and me crashing our Daleks in the first Patrick Troughton story; and the nucleus of the swarm, when they finally confirmed the studio was being filled with fragments of fibreglass from my costume. Everyone panicked, they closed the studio and issued masks to everyone, and I'm in this costume wondering 'What the hell am I doing? They've all got masks and I'm in the damn thing!' But there's just so many memories from Doctor Who. I suppose the biggest joy is that, after twenty-five years, you now hear the word 'Dalek' as part of the English language.

If you want to know who my favourite Doctor was, I think I'll reply the same as I did to a young gentleman from Radio Orwell who interviewed me live and asked me the same question to finish the interview. Donning a Dalek voice I replied, 'Doctor? There is no favourite Doctor. The only favourite Doctor is an *exterminated* Doctor!'" ❑

● **Interviewed by Gary Leigh**

● **Postscript:** *John has remained extremely busy as a jobbing actor in recent years. As well as his tour in Fiddler on the Roof, he has appeared as Marley in the Sadlers Wells Theatre's version of A Christmas Carol and Oz in The Wizard of Oz in Woolsey in Ipswich; recorded London's Burning, Sophia and Constance and Mulberry for television; and had parts in various films including The Meaning of Life, Erik the Viking, Little Shoppe of Horrors and Bullseye (with Nicholas Courtney). He has also done commercial and photographic jobs for cinema, television and the press.*



John at the opening of the MOMI Doctor Who exhibition (London, 1991)

1965 the Dalek films 1966

Milton Subotsky

"I would love to produce Doctor Who as an animation series" - June 1990

Peter Cushing on the set of *Doctor Who and the Daleks*, 1965.

"I ALWAYS wanted to make films, ever since I was a kid brought up in Brooklyn, New York. I used to save my lunch money and on Saturdays go and see three double features. I just went for entertainment. I used to watch comedies, which were my favourites, musicals and action adventure like all children. I loved everything, but particularly comedy and music.

When I got out of high school, at the age of seventeen, I wrote to every film company in the New York telephone book, and one of them gave me a job as a general assistant. I began by carrying the camera and then I did camera work, sound recording and film editing. At that time we were bidding on a government project and I wrote the script for it.

I made four pop musicals including *Rock! Rock! Rock!*, *Disc Jockey Jamboree* and *Just For Fun.* They were very successful films. When I did *Rock! Rock! Rock!* I started to write pop songs and had a number one hit called *Baby Baby* with Frankie Lymon and the Teenagers. After that we did a remake of *The Last Mile* with Mickey Rooney.

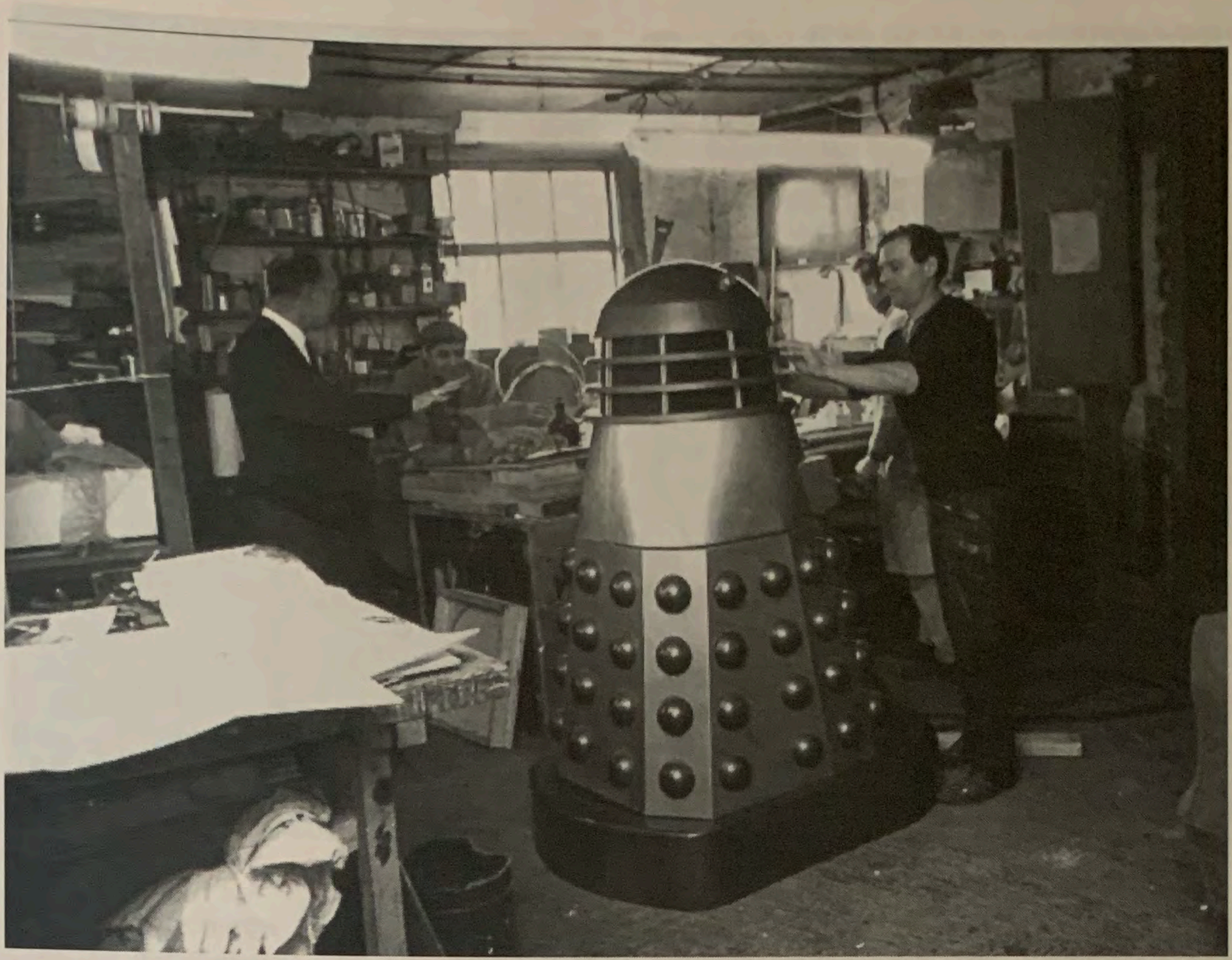
I came to England in 1959 and did a film - for which I had written the story - called *City of the Dead* with Christopher Lee, which was very successful. After that I did more musicals and then *Doctor Terror's House of Horrors*, which started me on the horror fantasy films.

I liked it here and so I decided to stay, although America's the big market and where the money is. Even the films I made in England we had to go to America to get the money. British films are very insular. They don't aim for the world market or, more to the point, they don't appeal to the American market. American companies moved out of England around about 1975, but they are now starting to come back. Most of the movies we were making then were Channel 4-type movies which are very insular indeed, dealing with regional topics and only subjects that the British are concerned with, so they didn't have a great world market and the money dried up here. Also the Tory Government dropped the tax allowances for investment in films together with the quota system, so all the things that appealed for financing British films no longer existed.

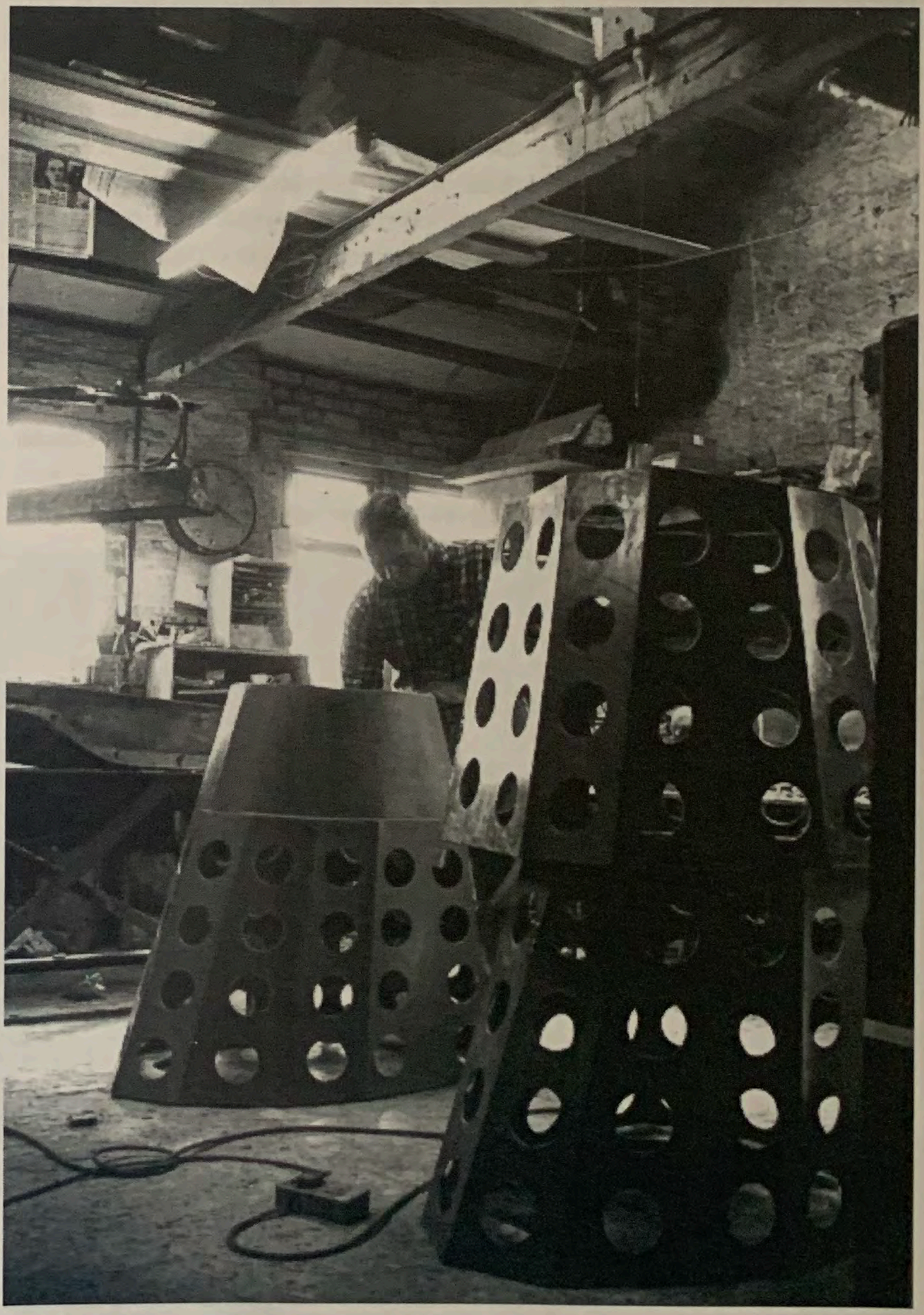
Now everyone is starting to think twice about our industry and I think there's going to be a revival, maybe looking towards Europe and the European market rather than the American market. If you ask a British filmmaker to name successful British films, he'll talk about *My Beautiful Laundrette* or *A Room With A View*. Nobody is going to mention films like *Star Wars*, *Aliens* or *Superman* because they simply don't think that way. Sure they were American-financed films, but they were made in England. They were made with an all-British crew, all British personnel, in a British studio, so they were British films except for the finance. It's the people who make the Channel 4-type movies who denigrate these films. They say, 'Well, these are American films made in British studios, therefore they are not genuine British movies'. British films always feel that they have to have a British subject! None of my films were ever like that - I always aimed for the world market.

Dr. Who and the Daleks (1965)...

I had just made *Doctor Terror's House of Horrors* which was financed by a man called Joseph Vegoda. He had a company called Regal Pictures which was later absorbed by British Lion, and he said, 'Let's do another film'. We thought about it and after a while we decided to do Doctor Who, so we went to the BBC, got the rights and did the first Doctor Who film. Doctor Who had a kind of gusto and I can see why it was and is successful, but if you look back at the early stories now they look so crude. Some of the series I liked very much. The problem is that there are lots of writers, so some stories are good and some not quite so good.



(Above and below) Shawcraft also built the movie Daleks to the BBC blueprints



For the film I just read the script - in fact I haven't seen those first Dalek episodes at all! I kept as close to the original script in terms of structure, but cut it down in order to keep the action going. What I was after was action all the way with no pause for dialogue. The sole purpose of the dialogue was to push the action forward, so when I went through the original script I cut out big sections, simply because they were just padding.

The BBC provided us with the ring modulator for the Dalek voices and the design plans so we made our own just as the BBC told us. They also lent us whatever Daleks they had; there must have been about 25-30 in all in the first and approximately the same in the second. They were exactly like the BBC Daleks and were even operated by the Dalek operators that worked for the BBC. The only difference was that the lights on the Daleks were supposed to flash in synch with the dialogue but the director didn't pay any attention to this and just had them flashing any old how, so when I got the first film in the cutting room I had to rewrite a lot of the dialogue to fit the flashes. Also we wanted something more visual for the extermination effect. There really wasn't any great reason for changing it other than that. You have to remember that we are dealing with film here and not television, and so we had to be more visual and big.

They were very good to us, although we couldn't get the original series music and titles because they were asking far too much money, which was a shame because I didn't like the music for the first film; it was too heavy. I wanted a more action-packed score. Joseph Vegoda had a publishing company who he wanted to publish the music, so he commissioned the composer. The second film's title sequence was done in the effects studio. It was nothing more that a series of paints and oils going down a drain, a simple and cheap effect, but I would have liked the BBC titles!

We felt we needed a bigger world name than William Hartnell, and Peter Cushing was my first choice to play the Doctor. He did a totally different characterisation of course. He was very professional indeed. He is very inward, not very sociable, but very pleasant towards his fellow actors. The best way to sum up Peter is to say he is a very pleasant pro who is very formal. An excellent bloke to have around. We tried, as far as possible within the confines of the budget, to give people a big picture. We did the film in Techniscope, which is when you take a 35mm frame and put two animorphic images on each frame so your film costs are cut in half. The colour was provided by Technicolor.

I wrote the script for a much younger audience. I cast Roberta Tovey for the sole reason because I wanted to make a film for children, whereas the television version wasn't really meant for children. She was very young but she coped wonderfully. I think children in general handle pictures very well - in fact she had the hardest dialogue in the films! I remember at the time people complained about the violence and everything, so I wanted to bring the programme to a younger age group. I'm very concerned about making films for children. These days there is nothing really about for children to go and see. If you look at this week's *Variety*, all the films bar one is an '18' certificate.

I was interested only in comedy and action, and making a film that would delight its audience and be fun. I did every piece of action I could think of and just enough plot to tie the action together. What I was after was a very fast-paced, *wham-bam* action movie with fun and comedy. All my films were very fast. They move from story point to story point. Even the horror films had no blood, no gore, they just tell the stories.

We had a set designer called Bill Constable, who we used on all of our pictures. He was very good and we worked very well with him. I thought that the petrified forest design was excellent (it was

At work...

created in the plaster workshops at Shepperton), as was the hill going up to the city which opened up and which everyone fell in. Bill decided to design his own police box and I accepted his design. We wanted something that was very spacious inside. In fact, if you look at the TARDIS on television over the years it has changed quite a bit. We just wanted to do our own thing.

We always used the same personnel on each picture so we all knew each other well and worked together wonderfully. As a result of this, all the actors who worked on our pictures said 'It's just like joining a family', and if you consider that we were making three-four pictures a year, it was very important to get along well with the staff around you.

One of the funniest things I can remember was really done as a joke. The leader of the Thals had just finished his lines urging the Thals to fight the Daleks when Barrie Ingham, who played Alydon, just for fun put in the famous speech from Henry V. It wasn't until he got to the end of this that the director woke up to what he was doing and shouted *'Cut!'*.When everyone saw the rushes of this section they were in fits of laughter!

It was incredibly cheap to do, even for 1965. The whole film cost £180,000 which, today, you couldn't film two day's worth for that amount of money. I think it took about six weeks to shoot, which was about normal. I think it opened on the circuit all over the country at the same time. You know from the very first day if people are going to see the film, and the first film was very successful. We wouldn't have made a sequel otherwise.

D*ALEKS - Invasion Earth 2150 A.D. (1966)...*

Joe Vegoda came back to me after the first film and said, 'Let's do a sequel!' (In fact I already had a screen play written for a third, but we never got the rights so we never did it). The selling point of the original film was that it was in colour and on the big screen. By the second film we had done all this so really it was just another film. I suppose the title *Daleks - Invasion Earth 2150 A.D.* was as good a selling point as any, but apart from that there was no great selling point.

It wasn't as successful as the first film, and I didn't think it would be. In fact I suggested that we don't make it, but frankly I think it turned out to be a better picture than the first one. The second film was largely made in the cutting room. It didn't work until we got it there and made it work, but, looking back, I think it moved wonderfully. If you look at it now it looks as good as any picture made today.

Peter fell ill during filming but that didn't make any difference except for the cost. The doctor wouldn't let him work but I have no idea what was wrong with him. The insurance company paid £30,000 for the extra days' filming that we had to have. I kept the costs for the insurance company as low as possible so, in effect, they paid for Peter's illness. What we did was to film every single scene that didn't include Peter Cushing. We'd 'pack-strike' the set (which means you take it down and put it into storage and put it up again quite quickly), so we'd shoot a scene with everyone but Peter, pack that bit away and put it up again when Peter came back using the parts of the set we needed to show behind him.

The flying saucer was a fairly small model and was made by Ted Samuels, who was in charge of the special effects department at Shepperton. It was battery operated and flown on wires. On the shot where it's following and bombing the truck it was matted onto the film. When we built the saucer on the set (which was gigantic), we just made the front where the ramp leading into it was. It was built on H stage at Shepperton, which is the largest stage in Europe. It's also a silent stage, which was good because we didn't need sound.

We also built the Dalek city for the first film on H stage. It really was that size. What you see on the screen is what we saw in the studio! If you have ever been to H stage at Shepperton, you will know what I mean. It really is huge - the same size as two city blocks! You can build absolutely anything on there. They built the forest for the 1980 *Flash Gordon* film on there, and I remember

SHOE REPAIRS
24 HOUR SERVICE

...and play. Jenny Linden and Roy Castle (*Doctor Who and the Daleks, 1965*)

that I used it on a film called *Danger Route* where we flooded Stage H and had boats going up and down it! The entire harbour for the film *Lord Jim* was built on there.

After the Dalek films, my next pictures included *The House That Dripped Blood* and *Tales From The Crypt*. I actually started Hammer off in the horror business (up to about 1956 they had made detective stories and comedies). After I did *Rock! Rock! Rock!* (my first feature), I wrote a screenplay for *Frankenstein* and we took it to someone at Hammer who we thought could finance it. He said 'What do you guys know about making horror films - you make musicals!' Nevertheless he sent the script to James Carreras in England but, after a lot of fuss, they decided that my script would be far too expensive to make!

...rest...

I would still use the third script were I to do a third film today. It's a giant monsters film and I call it 'Doctor Who's Greatest Adventure'. It's got two Doctors in it because the problem is so big it needs two Time Lords to solve it. I would use Jon Pertwee or Tom Baker for the older Doctor and anyone good enough could play the younger one. It's a very good script. In fact I did try to make it just before Coast To Coast got the rights, but the BBC wouldn't sell and gave the rights to them instead. It is a big, big film and I would think it would cost upwards of £15 million to make.

My favourite films now are comedies and musicals. When I record stuff to keep off the television it's films like Laurel and Hardy and Buster Keaton. The sole reason why these films work is because they were always dead earnest. They never acted as if they were being funny, so these people are tops for me. On television today there is so much I find funny. At the present time my favourite is Red Dwarf - I think that's classic comedy.

British TV is the best in the world! Every week I mark off the things I want to watch, and there is a vast amount. Far too much, I think, but there you are. I watch all of the current affairs shows like Panorama, which I think is top notch - you would not get anything like it in America, nor anywhere else for that matter. What I do hate are the satellite stations in this country. If you look around where the dishes are, they are all in poor housing estates and council flats. You don't find them in respectable areas because more educated people just don't want to watch the junk they put on.

I don't think I would like to produce any long-running series, that's not for me, but I actually think Doctor Who would make a wonderful animated series. In fact I would love to produce Doctor Who as an animation series. I'm sure it would be a big hit and I'm surprised that nobody has done it yet. I would go through each of the TV stories and re-do them as a one-hour story.

Doctor Who is almost like a god, and by that I mean whatever danger he's in he always comes out on top, but above all he does this by using his intelligence to overcome evil, which is good. I very much liked the series with Jon Pertwee when most of the adventures were set on Earth because the producers tended to make the alien planet adventures very stereotyped - you would see the same story in different settings again and again. And Pertwee was very much my kind of Doctor Who. He had authority and a good sense of humour. My second favourite is Tom Baker for much the same reasons.

I think the later stories lack good humour, which I think stopped after Tom Baker. I think it got very cruel and violent, in fact it was far too violent for me to enjoy. I think it was John Nathan-Turner's personal preference. I thought Peter Davison was very wishy washy and Colin Baker was, well, dreadful in the whole characterisation, and that includes that awful costume. I think that they were just sending up the show for the sake of it. Sylvester McCoy is now doing straight acting in plays, but I don't like him as Doctor Who. I would certainly not have made it in that way, in fact, if I were making it, I would make it for a much younger age group with fun and fantasy and far less violence." ❑

● **Interviewed by Tim Burchell**

● **Postscript:** *Milton Subotsky passed away in June 1991, aged 80.*

***Daleks - Invasion Earth 2150 A.D.* (1966)**

1978

Blake's 7

1981

Gareth Thomas

"Somebody up there's casting" - January 1991

"I WAS ASKED to do BLAKE'S 7, it's really as simple as that. I think Terry Nation - who was quite particular about who he wanted cast - was impressed or interested by something I'd done and recommended me to the producer, David Maloney.

I very rarely read any science fiction, although the series was fascinating to work on and fun to do. It was also damned hard work! There was immense pressure on the first two series which I worked on because the BBC didn't quite get their scheduling right. We were working the most unbelievable hours, often over-running the accepted television working hours.

Lots of things went wrong all the time - and not all of them funny! Things didn't go right, in fact, from the very first time we did location filming (*Time Squad*). Paul (*Darrow*) and I were standing on this rather muddy slope, and when the camera started turning we just started sliding, ever so slowly, down this slope as we played out our dialogue. Another story (*Stardrive*) required Paul to leap on to the back of a beach buggy thing which someone was driving and shout '*Go*!' He managed the running and jumping bit fine, but on the first few takes the buggy refused to go, and Paul tumbled over the back and onto the ground!

Paul used to say, 'I'm the pretty one, you're the actor', which became especially true as he gathered American women as devoted fans! Paul Darrow is one of the nicest guys around of course. Paul is just Paul - a great actor, as long as he's playing Paul Darrow! Mike Keating is a very funny man and should have his own show. He'd be a great hit, I'm sure.

The special effects blokes were nutcases - they blew me right off my feet on one occasion! I was supposed to be running across a mine field (*Pressure Point*) and the mines were meant to go off either side of me. The effects guy responsible said, 'Would you run across the field as fast as you can, so I can time the explosions?' I tried it, shifting fairly fast, and he was satisfied everything was going to go smoothly. I don't know if you've ever had this happen to you, but when an explosion goes off up your arse you tend to move rather more quickly than you might normally! I was going along pretty damn fast, the explosions were getting out of synch, so the guy decided to let the final three off all at once. Wham! One went off in front of me, two right behind. The explosions literally picked me up and hurled me into a nearby hedge! Thankfully I was alright.

I was contracted for two series and when my contract finished I decided not to renew, despite the BBC trying to be most persuasive financially. The series had an alternative lead character in Paul Darrow's Avon, so Blake wasn't such a great loss. My reasons were straightforward. First, I'd done 26 episodes and felt I couldn't take the character of Blake any further, as a character. Secondly, I did believe the series was going a little bit astray. It had started off as *The Dirty Dozen* in Space, with real gutsy characters, but by the end of the second series it had become tired. The Liberator was this giant spaceship which had this giant room full of wonderful clothes which just happened to fit us all. Things became easy for the characters. At that stage, too, the plots were descending into a kind of 'And with one bound they were free' formula, whereas prior to that it had actually been quite a gutsy series, considering it was the BBC and the early timeslot. I mean, it was still a good series after I left, it just didn't suit me, so I got out.

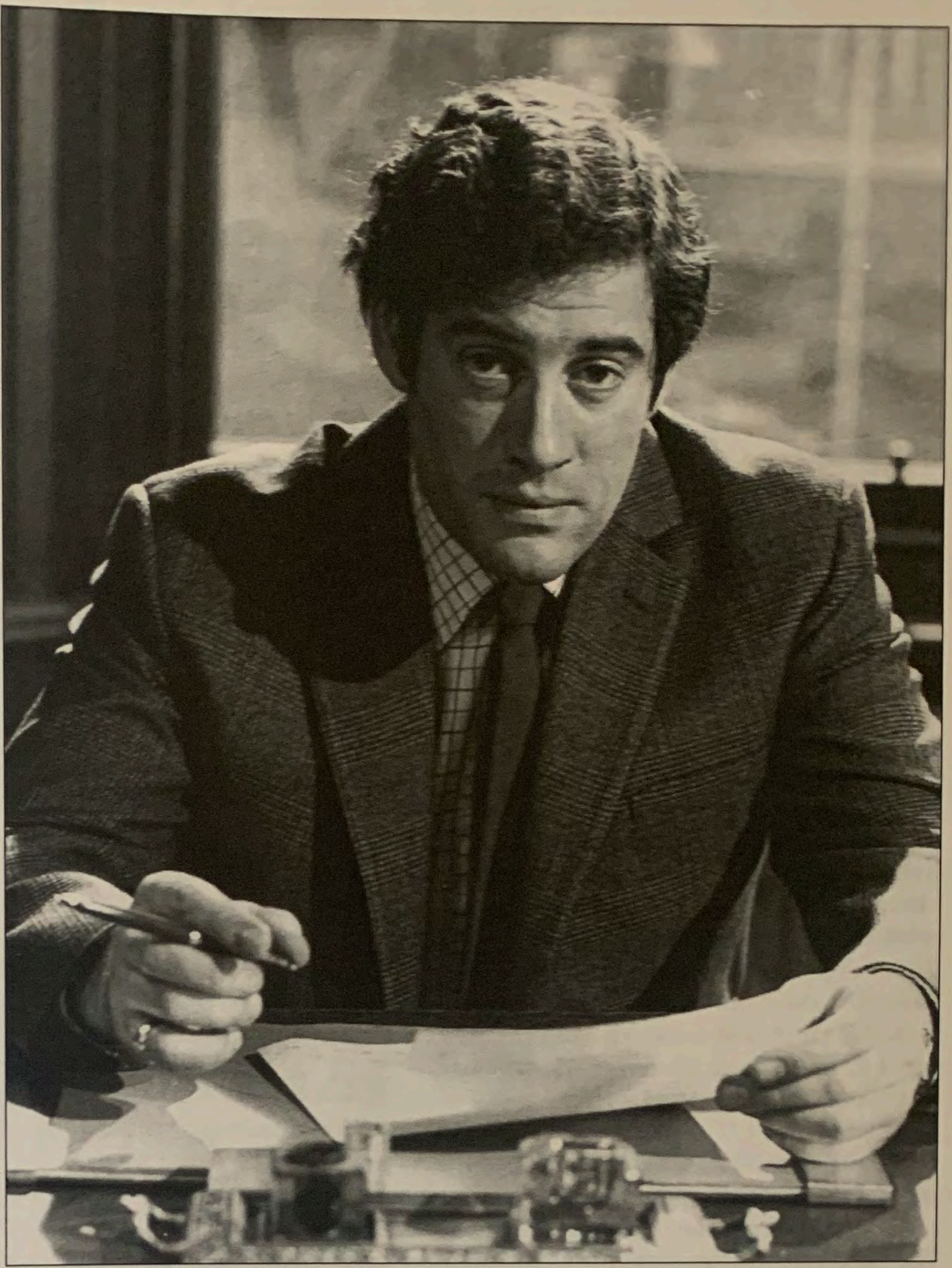
I only saw one episode after I went, I can't remember which. I went direct from the series to working in the theatre as part of the Royal Shakespeare Company. Working in the theatre means you just forget television. I've never actually seen myself on the television at all, but that's largely through choice.

Because the series was still going and still called BLAKE'S 7, producers thought I was still in it and so unavailable for other roles, so I wasn't getting work. It was becoming a bit of a millstone, actually damaging my career. I insisted in the final episode, *Blake*, that I had to be seen to be dead, finally. I wanted the character killed off once and for all. I came in only for that one episode and hadn't been following it, so the main changes I noticed were the obvious ones. Glynis Barber had come in and Sally Knyvette had left along with me, and Steve Pacey had come in as a clean-cut hero to balance Avon's complex character.

I think the series had to end, it had run its natural course. There were only really two protagonists - us, the rebels, and the Federation in the form of Servalan. There's a limit as to how far you can go without neither of them actually winning and neither actually losing, and after 52 episodes one or the other has got to win. That's the reason the BBC ended the series. It was nothing to do with finance or viewing figures - after all, the final episode got over ten million viewers opposite Coronation Street. It was implied that the producers had decided they couldn't go anywhere else with it.

I don't think it's going to come back, at least with the old cast, as we've all moved on now. A one-off film would be a lovely idea. That would be great fun! I'd have to dye my hair black again as it's since gone grey! There has been talk of it being done again with American money specially for American television. I don't think the BBC would be interested in doing it, and they wouldn't have the finance for a film either. Terry Nation is keen. I don't know whether he'd bring back Blake but he'd certainly bring Avon back - he's become the important character. I'd certainly consider doing the role again for a film, but not for a television series. I've moved on too far now.

I'd love to do a film. I've only been in very small parts so it's something I haven't done properly. It really doesn't matter to me, though, whether it's theatre, radio, television or cinema, just as long as I keep working. Doing a film would be a challenge. (*Looks skywards*) Do you hear that? Somebody up there's casting!



Sutherland's Law (*The Sea*, June 1974)

I USED TO enjoy Doctor Who as a youngster. Nowadays I occasionally watch it when mates of mine are in it. I watched a few years back when Paul Darrow went into Doctor Who (*Timelash, 1985*), and played Avon all over again! I probably would take a part if offered. It would be enormous fun, I imagine.

There was something I wanted to do with Blake's 7 and Doctor Who, which the BBC refused to countenance. At that time Tom Baker was still doing Doctor Who and I had a plan which the two producers - David Maloney for us and, I think, Graham Williams from Doctor Who - were also keen to do. It didn't matter whether this was in Blake's 7 or Doctor Who, but what I wanted was for either the Doctor or Blake to be wandering down a corridor (there were a lot of corridors in both series, so it figured that at some point their universes must cross!), and Tom Baker and I would pass each other: 'Morning, Blake.' 'Morning, Doctor.' And that'd be it, we'd then get on with the story. We wanted to see how many people would clock it up! The BBC don't have a sense of humour, though, and spiked it. It would have been great fun!

People seem to assume actors get paid enormous sums of money. Unfortunately, we don't. Well, a few do, the exceptions, but most working actors don't. Per hour, I suppose we do get paid very well, but there are long periods out of work when you're not making programmes and there's no money coming in. I'm probably in the top 20% of earning actors in this country and I can't afford a new car, so there you go.

There are several reasons why I haven't gone to many conventions. I was in the Royal Shakespeare Company right after leaving the series, then went straight into another television series, so I was simply unavailable. I did go to one called Scorpio a few years back in the States. When I left, the series was still too close to go and talk about it. Blake's 7 was still being shown and I did want to divorce myself from it as much as possible, to get work as much as for any other reason, so I buried myself up in Stratford in the Royal Shakespeare Company and I didn't have much contact with anyone, really.

There was another reason. I do a job, which I love, but I can't see why people put us actors on a pedestal. We're the same as everyone else, our job just happens to be seen by a lot of people. I don't like the system of billing, for example, of the actor's name going above the title of the piece. I don't think it's necessary because there are few actors who can put bums on seats. Yes, Michael Caine can, but run-of-the-mill actors just do a job.

I don't get annoyed by fans because there is one very simple rule that an actor has to remember; anyone who asks for your autograph is paying your wages. That's the attitude to have, always. One should never be rude, no matter how ill you're feeling or bad-tempered or whatever, because they pay your wages! It can be a bit much, though, if you're having a quiet meal and someone storms up, bangs an autograph book on the table and demands you sign it!" ❑

● **Interviewed by Brian J. Robb**

● **Postscript:** *Gareth's recent television appearances include the popular Boon for Central, the children's series Emlyn's Moon and (appropriately) We Are Seven for HTV, and London's Burning - on which he is a semi-regular - for LWT. He has also retraced his classical theatre roots with King Lear at the Northcott Theatre in Exeter and appeared in the feature film The Sparrow directed by Franco Zefirelli.*

1978 **Blake's 7** 1982

Michael Keating

"At one point we though we might have to go out live, which would have been fatal" - November 1991

Michael Keating and Paul Darrow (*Time Squad*, 1978)

"Blake's 7 was my first block television. I did odds and ends before, mainly in theatre, so it was an eye-opener to be involved in an on-going programme.

It's seen a resurgence of interest with the release of the videos. I did a repertory season with Paul Darrow (*Summer 1991*) and a lot of people came to see us who'd only just become fans. It's strange because we finished Blake's 7 exactly ten years ago (7th November 1981 it was). Then it took off in America, Australia, New Zealand and so on and that kept us going, and now there's been this resurgence.

If we'd been in, say, The Brothers, I wonder if we'd have had the same sort of attention? I remember Colin Baker telling me that The Brothers had a big following in Israel and Scandinavia. He went to some sort of reception in Israel, but it generally seems to be science fiction that attracts such followers. I think it was Star Trek that started it off; and now I think we've reached a stage where television is forty, fifty years old and people are looking back at old programmes and discovering them again.

The BBC have steadfastly refused to repeat Blake's 7 and I rather suspect that they were rather embarrassed by it. They felt they had to have science fiction but that it wasn't really the sort of thing that the BBC ought to be doing. But Blake was a good show. I enjoyed it, most of the time (obviously there were times that weren't as enjoyable as others). We had a good time and we all got on very well. In fact people who came in just for one episode used to remark upon the fact that we were most welcoming. In a way we clung together as actors and actresses because the special effects were so baffling to begin with!

I also did four episodes of Doctor Who (*The Sun Makers, 1977*) which was good fun as well. I think there's something about science fiction that appeals to actors and actresses maybe more than other things because it's very theatrical in its own way and anything can happen, but Blake's 7 was different to Doctor Who in that it was a lot more hard-hitting. When it started it was going to be a more adult programme, I mean, Blake was charged with child molesting, although it was a false charge, and he was fighting against a dictatorship. Then there was a bit of an outcry in the late Seventies about violence on TV and we had to tone Blake's 7 down. In the end it became what is called 'kiddult' - it appealed to adults and children.

I think it lost its way a bit when Terry Nation went to the States. He started it off and I thought it was a great idea under him, but by the fourth series I think it had run out of steam. I always thought that we should have had a situation, say in the third season, where we were stuck on one particular planet and had to fight our way off it over three or four episodes instead of each week just getting back on the ship and going off. It got to the stage where you just knew that anyone we met would be dead by the end of the episode because we just couldn't afford to keep them on.

It all came down to time and money. If we'd had longer on each episode and they'd had longer to write them it might have held together better. We would do a lot of block filming, say for the first four or six episodes of a season, then we'd go into making the studio stuff. It would average out that we would spend about three weeks per episode, but when we started we only had six months to make the entire season. The BBC in those days was rather like the Civil Service - it had no idea. I don't think the people in the budget section ever watched television; they just said 'Oh yeah fifty minute episodes, that's two days in studio', forgetting that we had all the special effects to put on afterwards.

The end result was that we never finished an episode and everything had to be remounted (at one point we thought we might even have to go out live, which would have been fatal). So by the time we got to the third season we had about eight months and nine for the last. I guess, ideally, we really needed about nine months and a longer break in the middle to consider.

Although the BBC made (and still make) money out of Blake's 7, they didn't put it back into the series itself. It could have been developed, the chances were there. It was obviously more popular than they had thought it was going to be and people still talk about it. Looking at television today and a lot of the stuff that's going out now, it was pretty well done in comparison. ❑

- **Interviewed by Peter Linford and Stephen O'Brien**

- **Postscript:** *Since this interview, I have been involved in theatre, except for several forays playing cameo roles in TV. The main theatre parts I have done, which for me have been an honour to be involved in, have been playing Eddy in A View From The Bridge by Arthur Miller at Westcliff on Sea, for which I won the 1991-92 Stella Award, and the tour of Home by David Storey playing Jack, which was originally played in 1970 in the West End and on Broadway by Sir Ralph Richardson. Our tour of Home was picked as Play of the Week by Time Out in January 1994.* - ***Michael Keating, February 1994***

1978

Blake's 7

1981

Jacqueline Pearce

"I'm not going to let what happened ten years ago affect my happiness for today" - July 1990,

WE may as wellL get straight into B*LAKE'S* 7. *Were you aware of any background motives of the production team in deciding to make the central villain a woman?*

No. When Terry (*Nation*) started writing the series Servalan was a man, and half way through the first script he woke up one morning and said 'No, he should be a she!'

Did he give a reason?

Because he finds it difficult to write for women he started writing it as a man, and then I suppose he could see the value of having a villain who was a woman, but she was an unusual woman. She wasn't your average girl-next-door.

You have said that you didn't think Servalan was evil. What, then, did you perceive her motivation as being?

I saw her as a woman who was very damaged and driven by pain. That can result as manifesting as evil and perhaps it did, but I'm saying that what drove her was not a desire to be evil but a desire to escape from pain, and by keeping oneself invulnerable and getting more and more power, then you can protect yourself.

But this wasn't a revenge desire? As part of your preparation for playing the part - as your own estimation of the background - did you come up with any specific events?

No, I don't work like that. She developed as the series continued and as I developed as a human being, and it probably was motivated by revenge. I hadn't thought of that and I think you're probably right.

Although she wasn't taking her revenge out on whoever had caused the pain...

No, it was life.

That, surely, is vengeful evilness?

She was taking her revenge out on life, and as you go through life you learn, hopefully, not to take it so personally and to see that, in every painful experience, there is a most valuable growth that you can get. Now, if the series had continued, I would have liked it to have continued in that area; to show the growth that human beings can make and the paths by which they do it.

That was one of the things I was going to ask you; had Blake continued, which way would Servalan have gone?

I don't know. When I finished the series I laid her to rest. If ever we did it again I'd be fascinated to see what happened to her.

People have said that B*LAKE'S* 7 *was an unhappy show to work on. Was this really so?*

I can only speak for myself, and for the first three seasons I was very happy; particularly the third season which is my favourite. We had a new influx of people - I adored Steven Pacey. I was very happy in that series, they served me quite well, and then it all changed in the fourth series. I felt that egos got in the way and, instead of working for the good of the show, it became about individual specific egos wanting to dominate.

On the acting side or the production side?

On the acting side and, I think, on the production side as well. Oh indeed.

Was there a feeling, perhaps, when Vere Lorrimer took over that he approached it in the wrong way by trying to start again? For example he replaced Zen with Slave, the Liberator with the Scorpio...

Right.

...and that was a mistake. Perhaps he should have changed the way the series went; instead of always having them on top, having them on the run for instance?

Absolutely. Yes, I agree with you. But the people who were involved with the show I don't think had the imagination to see what they could do with it, which is a great pity.

So you quite strongly feel that it was a show which didn't fulfil its poten-

Happier days: the cast of Season Three

tial?

Oh absolutely.

But was it fulfilling it at the start?

Probably not. It started to fulfil it more and more as it developed and as people got more and more involved with it. But no, it didn't. It fell apart in series four.

You spoke well of Terry Nation. He was credited with scripting all of the first season but later did less. Was he eased out or did he just decide to move on - he wasn't involved with the last season at all?

No he wasn't, he was in America by then, and I suppose he felt that there was more for him there. Terry is aware of the frustrations of working with the BBC. I think he probably made the wisest decision for him, but he was much missed by us.

> *"I personally felt that, in the fourth series, what was happening in the scripts was happening off-screen as well and that it was them against me!"*

So presumably he was heavily involved with the show more than just delivering the scripts? Was he often around the studio?

He was never around when I was there, but I didn't join until episode six (*Seek-Locate-Destroy*) of the first series so I don't know what went on before that or how great his involvement was in the pre-production stage.

And when he left, where then did the creative impetus stem from?

In which season?

In the last season.

In the third we shifted away from the 'Blake crusading against the Federation' thing to a more fantasy-based science fiction format. I personally felt that, in the fourth series, what was happening in the scripts was happening off-screen as well and that it was them against me!

You really felt that?

Yes, I really did. I really did. They gave me as few episodes as they could get away with and, instead of using the strength that I brought to the show, they tried to topple me. That's what I feel.

But do you think that started in the last season? There was a lot less seen of the Federation in the third season when David Maloney was still there and Vere Lorrimer wasn't producer then. The show didn't seem to have started to go wrong at that point.

In that season I was very happy. I was having a good time, but it changed in the fourth season. David Maloney left after Season Three, then it was Vere and Chris Boucher.

Was this, then, an attitude towards the women in the series? Sally Knyvette and Jan Chappel have both said that they felt that they as women...

Yes.

...weren't used as well as they could have been...

Yes.

...or were even abused.

Yes.

Did you feel that?

Yes.

And yet you said you were happy to start with?

I was happy to start with. I think the women were ill-used. I also think that you have a responsibility to develop your character as best as you can and not rely on other people to do it for you. That's something you learn as you go through life and acting. But it's the BBC and it's bureaucratic and there is sexist thinking, I don't care what anyone says.

But one would have thought that that would be less so because you weren't part of a team which was basically male. There was Gareth Thomas and Paul Darrow, but you were independent.

Exactly, I was an independent woman, and I think a lot of men find that threatening.

In which case it does seem slightly odd that - if there was that feeling at the BBC - they allowed the main villain to be a woman in the first place?

Yes, but I was only supposed to be in the one episode and then leave. It was only because David Maloney thought that I was good and asked me to stay on that that character took off anyway. She was never intended to be 'the heavy' going through the series.

It was going to be Stephen Greif originally?

Yes.

How did you react to the change in casting there when Brian Croucher

With Peter Cushing in THE ZOO GANG (*The Counterfeit Trap*, April 1974)

came along? Paul Darrow I recall wrote an article in the BLAKE'S 7 Marvel magazine years ago saying that he thought that once the casting had changed that really spelt the end of the character and that it wasn't going to succeed.

Well, I think I agree because Brian Croucher is not Stephen Greif. He's a totally different actor and I thought it was very unfair to make an actor play another actor's part, which is effectively what he had to do. Same character, same name, and they're two different people, so it would have been much better to have created a new character. It wasn't a personal thing to Brian, we all liked him very much. It was just that we felt that, for an actor, it was a very unfair thing to do. Our sympathies were completely with Brian, but it was Terry's insistence that he wanted that character to remain.

And then it came about that he left? How? Was he simply written out or did he decide he didn't want to do it ?

I think it was probably a combination of the two.

Would you, do you think, have been as happy with your part in the series had he continued?

I don't think it would have affected me either way. It would have been quite nice to have had an ally and someone to play with.

> *"I cared about that series very much, I put everything I had into it. I was very ill by the end of it and thought that I had not been served well"*

It's interesting what you were saying, that Servalan wasn't evil, because Brian Croucher said that same thing about Travis. Is this a thing, when you get villainous roles, that you begin to sympathise with the character?

I think that to say someone is evil is far too black and white. You can get into a whole discussion then about what is evil and why does it exist and all that, but I am interested in why somebody is manifesting their evilness rather than just saying they are evil and playing an evil person.

Once the decision to continue with Servalan was made, was there any sitting down and deciding what you were going to do with her, or did you know in your mind where this character was going to go?

No. They asked me to stay on until the end of the first series and I thought it would just be to the end of the first series. But no, as far as I can remember there was certainly no discussion with the actors about what was going to happen. There never is.

Your non-appearance in the last episode obviously galled you?

I did, at the time, take it personally, and think it was intended personally. I could be totally wrong and just be being paranoid, but I did take it personally. I cared about that series very much, I put everything I had into it. I was very ill by the end of it and I thought that I had not been served well.

Can you be more explicit about your objections to certain people, this ego problem?

Not really. I don't think I can because it would involve mentioning people's names and I don't think that would be a fair thing to do. And it's only my opinion anyway.

There has been talk, ever since the series went off the air, of a revival of the show. Given your feelings, would you be interested in taking part?

Yes, I would be.

But given what conditions? Obviously if it was going to carry on...

Ah, no, no, no. As it was, no way would I be interested in doing it! I would like it done with a really intelligent producer and perhaps done as a film or with one of the independent companies because I just loathe the BBC. But then ten years have gone by, perhaps I've changed, perhaps the BBC has, or perhaps I'm just being unrealistically optimistic, which is a trait of mine.

Do you think that, after all this time, it really is possible to get something like that going again? I mean, after all, we're all older now, the audience it had has moved on to different things. Is it still possible?

It would be different and it might not interest the audience that we originally had, but it might attract a different one now. I think it would certainly attract an audience. As you say it's ten years, which is a long time, and I'm still coming to conventions. And it's not only the fans - the original fans - but a new generation is now being introduced to it, so it's a constantly evolving thing.

When you were sent the script for Seek-Locate-Destroy, what was it that actually attracted you to it?

With Lawrence Payne in Doctor Who (*The Two Doctors*, 1985)

The fact that I was working at the English speaking theatre in Vienna at the time, and it meant coming back, getting off the plane and coming straight to rehearsal, and that doesn't often happen in an actor's life; to finish one job and start another. I was just so delighted to do that.

So it was that rather than the part of Servalan that attracted you?

It was a combination of many things, but that was certainly one of them.

So what was going on in Vienna?

I had done a play in the West End called *Otherwise Engaged*, and afterwards I was asked to do it in Vienna playing a different part, and that's why I went there, because I wanted to play the other part.

So you weren't training to be an actress there?

No, no, just working. I trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in this country and then I became a member of the Actor's Studio in America.

Is there any kind of snobbery about where you train, whether you go to RADA, LAMDA or wherever?

Yes, of course there is. There's snobbery in every area of life and my business is no exception, and probably much worse. There's a huge hierarchy but RADA has always been considered the best.

Why do you think that is?

Because it probably is, and because it has a tradition and so many fine actors - our finest actors, most of them - have come from that school. It's a good training ground, or it was when I was there.

Since we're on the subject of snobbery, do you find a snobbery in what kind of roles you're playing? When we talk to people about DOCTOR WHO, for example, people tend to regard it as a bit of a laugh.

Right!

Is there a snobbery today about doing science fiction and do you approach science fiction in the same way as something else?

Well I do. I approach my work as if it's the first and last job I've ever done or ever will do and give it the best shot that I possibly can, and I think that's the way one should approach everything. But there is a snobbery about it, yes. I think that's one of the reasons Stephen Greif left. I think his smart friends at the RSC were saying 'You shouldn't be doing this'.

So he did actually leave rather than simply not being available?

Yes, he left. He was asked to do the season and turned it down because they wouldn't pay him the money he wanted. I'm sure he was quite right to do that, too.

You were saying you approach a science fiction role in much the same way as you would anything else. Is acting a catharsis to you?

Yes. Yes it is, because what acting enables you to do is get in touch with sides of your personality that are socially unacceptable and express them in a controlled situation. That's very cathartic.

So what did Servalan teach you about yourself?

Oh, she taught me a great deal about myself. She taught me about my capacity for passion which I hadn't known about until then, and it was a great surprise to me. She also gave me a confidence that was very new to me, although it didn't last after I stopped playing her. Confidence and I had been strangers, and it was wonderful to know that I did actually have that within me and could develop it later. I do have my confidence now, it's taken me the best years of my life to get it, but she was very cathartic in breaking things down in me and showing me new things.

And now you're having a change in lifestyle?

Yes.

Is that to say that you're not going to act anymore?

No, it's saying that I'm no longer driven by the need to do it, which I have been all my life. I have been driven and I've finally reached a stage in my life where I'm no longer driven. It's as though a huge burden has been dropped from my shoulders and I feel very free and I want this period of my life for me. I'm living in Cornwall, which is something I've wanted to do for years. I'm very happy there and I'm working as an artist's model. I love being with artists; they're very gentle people and I find it very healing and also extremely creative. So it's wonderful for me to just discover something I can do that's creative other than acting. It's taken me a long time to discover that life is creative and you have to be an artist in your life first before you can become an artist in a specific area...

Becoming an artist's model is an unusual shift. One normally comes across models who then go on to acting...

Ah yes, but they're usually photographic models, not artistic models.

...which is a higher form of work altogether.

Oh, it's totally different. I did some photographic modelling the other week and loathed it. It's a completely different thing. I model nude for my artists. I do what's called life drawing or life painting where you draw from life, which is the nude body. Every artist, no matter what he does - whether it is landscape or abstract (like an actor who has to go back to the theatre every so often to touch base) - has to go back to drawing the human form. That's the root of his skill and technique.

So when you say "life" do you mean, rather than being impressionistic about it, actually drawing as it is?

Yes, although I've got one artist who paints me and his pictures have a very impressionistic feel because of his use of colour, and there's something very French (there's something quite French about me anyway) which he manages to get down on the canvass. I just happen to be naked.

Why in Cornwall? Do you have roots there?

No, I just had a tremendous emotional response to it when I went to St. Ives as a child of nine, and I feel so wonderful now as I stand in this wonderful studio in St. Ives modelling, looking out to sea, in a studio that is world famous - the St. Ives School of Painting - and I feel very proud to be a part of that tradition. But I always felt that St. Ives was my spiritual home, and now I'm there I understand why. I just feel that it will take care of me and it does and I love it, and I feel you should always go toward that which you love, even if it seems to defy the odds intellectually.

Moving on to Doctor Who now, which you recorded in 1984. It so happened that you and Paul Darrow appeared in the same season and in consecutive stories. I got the impression, watching Paul Darrow in a story called Timelash (which has been voted one of the all-time worst Doctor Who stories ever)...

Has it really? (*laughs*)

...that he was just going through his Avon routine all over again. Did you find, with playing Chessene in The Two Doctors, that there was a lot of Servalan in your interpretation? They were similar people.

Exactly. I was being cast to do the same sort of thing and I wasn't inventive enough to make it different. I was hampered by the costume which was not designed for me but for another actress who was originally going to do it (*Elizabeth Spriggs*). I had had success with Servalan and I was hesitant to try something new. I certainly wouldn't make that mistake now, but as I say I'm older and a little more confident.

But not wanting to do something new is equivalent to typecasting?

Of course it's typecasting.

Don't you object to that?

Well what can you do? People love to put you in a pigeon hole. It makes them feel safe. I don't know, I was saying to a friend just this morning that I'm not even sure if I want to act anymore because I can't get from acting what I want to get. I love working in a good company doing something wonderful like *White Mischief.* That was a wonderful experience to be in Africa with an extraordinary group of people living in extraordinary conditions under canvass in the Bush. But I have an overdeveloped sense of responsibility and there are things that I feel very strongly about. What I'm probably going to do is go off on my own and develop either as a comedienne or a one-woman show, quite soon I hope.

Would you then do your own writing as well?

Yes I would.

Have you actually done any writing?

When I was in Cornwall I decided that I was going to write because I've talked about writing for a long time. I think the reason you may have found this interview difficult is that I'm not that interested in talking about Blake's 7 or Doctor Who. I'm much more interested in talking about myself. The things that I feel passionate about are the things that I talk best about and I'm not actually passionate about something I did ten years ago except in how it's influenced me today, if that makes any sense.

Would it also be because you now regard it as an unhappy experience?

There is that as well, yes of course there is, and I don't want to keep that alive. There are marvellous things about it too like sitting here talking to you today ten years on and travelling all over the world to do conventions. It's been very good to me in a lot of ways and I like my relationships with the fans. I hate that word actually, it sounds derogatory, but the people who are kind enough to give us their support.

Do you think you gain a personal benefit from that experience in as much as you used to gain from acting?

Yes indeed, and that's what's so wonderful. I no longer feel that in order to be happy I have to be acting. My passion for my work has extended into a passion for life which I've always had but didn't know, so when I got to Cornwall I started to write. I'd just had an extraordinary experience with a friend of mine who had died from AIDS and I'd nursed him in hospital for the last month of his life. I'd lived in the hospital with him and I held his hand when he died, and that was an experience I was so privileged to have. I don't think many of us are with someone when they die and if you are it's not always beautiful, which it was with Simon because he had no fear of death and he died in a state of grace. The nurses were telling me that a bad death is when someone dies in a state of fear, which is common and very sad, so to see someone who had come to terms with approaching the final curtain in a state of bliss - he was a realised human being and a great spiritual teacher - really was an experience that changed my life. So I did what I'd always wanted to do; I went to Cornwall and I started writing about this experience with Si, but I think it's going to change into something else.

> *"I think the reason you may have found this interview difficult is that I'm not that interested in talking about Blake's 7 or Doctor Who. I'm much more interested in talking about myself"*

People who are suffering or who know that they are dying seem to be a lot more in tune with their lives.

Indeed they are and I think this is where I've been lucky, having been in a near death situation myself on more than one occasion and been very ill for quite a long time and death was a real possibility. When you live with that awareness, what it does is focus your attention onto the experience of life itself; what you feel about death and what your life means to you. There's nothing like pain, intense pain or indeed intense pleasure for really focusing your attention and finding out what your priorities are and what is important. So although when I went through that period of my life, which lasted for quite some time, death did seem preferable and I prayed for it on a daily basis. Now that I've come through it I see how infinitely fortunate I was to have had that.

Is this a humanist approach or a religious approach?

Can you tell me what you mean by that difference?

You see, what I've found about a friend of mine who's in a similar situation is that her suffering has drawn her much closer to God.

Yes, mine did too.

But is it a Christian God or...?

No way. I was educated in a convent for thirteen years. They got me at the age of four so I came out with some very funny ideas about life, God and all the rest of it which totally devastated my life for many years. I no longer believe in a Christian God, I think it's extremely damaging; that damaging, vengeful God who controls everything. What I do believe in now is an extraordinary intelligence that we have the capacity and indeed are destined, I think, to plug into at some point. That's what artists have. That's why people will devote their lives to getting in touch with that creative impulse which is the biggest high there is. People can also find it through sex but I think it has to be through spiritual sex, spiritual love, not lust, with the involvement of the whole human being. It's rare. That's what we are all searching for and when and if you do experience that then you know you've got no alternative but to follow that forever.

This is a thing that bothers me. Surely, if you're being drawn to God by the power of suffering, then there's something seriously wrong somewhere?

No, you are drawn to a god by the power of suffering because it's through suffering that you learn great secrets. Suffering does seem to be an essential part of the journey. I think one is initially drawn to God to find an answer to this suffering. You start asking the questions, 'Well, if this God loves me so much, then why the hell am I in this pain right now?', and that's when you start to examine the whole premise of the Christian God. I believe, at the end of the day, that we're here to have the best time of our lives and the Christian God, and all those religions are given to us by people who recognise the power that we have, potentially, within us and don't want us to have that. They want to keep the power and tell us what to do, and I think what is happening in the world now is that there is a new consciousness spreading through and people are saying 'That doesn't work, I have my power, I am God, God is within me. It's not something out there that controls me: it *is* me. I have that power'. And to use that responsibly that power is actually love, and if we do develop that capacity within us to love then we heal ourselves, we heal the planet and we have no problems.

> *"I believe that we're here to have the best time of our lives and the Christian God, and all those religions are given to us by people who recognise the power that we have, potentially, within us and don't want us to have that."*

There is a new aspect of self-interest emerging which disturbs me terribly.

I agree with you. I think it is, and a lot of the new age teachers - the few that I've seen - talk a lot of sense in certain areas, but there's a lot of emphasis on making money. Not that there's anything wrong with making money, indeed I hope I make a great deal of it myself because it's fun, but money is not one's God. It should not be one's God and there is a tremendous emphasis on that today, I agree, just satisfying oneself and not doing anything for one's fellow man. That is very dangerous, but then the Christian religion isn't that much better. You go to a lot of the poor countries where the people haven't got enough to eat and the roof of the church is made of gold and the priest is knocking on the door saying 'You've got to give something to the poor and give the little you've got'. In fact Terry Walsh told me this happened to his father. He's Catholic and he told the parish priest that his father had no money and no food in the fridge and the priest was saying 'Sure, but the little you've got you can give to the people that are starving'. And, as Terry said, 'My father *is* starving. Please, please...'!

Interesting as this discussion is, I'm not sure that it's actually something DWB will want to use. Therefore can I go back a few years to when you were still acting, and your appearance on SATURDAY SUPERSTORE with Colin Baker and Nicola Bryant. You were sitting there on this phone-in and no-one asked to speak to you.

Yes, I know!

Did that hurt?

Not really.

I had half a mind to ring in and ask about BLAKE'S 7!

Bless your heart. No, I guess the people who were watching were DOCTOR WHO fans and wanted to talk to Colin and Nicola and that's okay. Perhaps I shouldn't have been there.

Did you regret that you'd agreed to participate?

Actually it's not the sort of thing that I want to do and I suppose in some way that was emanating from me. I'm quite good at not getting people to approach me if I don't want to be approached and I was not really comfortable in that situation or playing that part.

Why do you think you were asked to do that appearance since, if I remember, that went out on the morning of the start of the season whereas The Two Doctors appeared much later on?

Absolutely, but it was really to publicise John Nathan-Turner's pantomime, *Cinderella*, which I was also appearing in with Colin and Nicola.

How did the pantomime go? Is it a good acting memory?

I can remember quite a lot about it. On a personal level yes, because I adored the DOCTOR WHO team because they were very very kind to me. I love John Nathan-Turner and I adore Colin Baker. They were really kind and made me feel very welcome. I was not happy within the genre of pantomime and I don't think I was very good in it. I was supposed to be playing the fairy queen and I was in a completely different play at the same time playing Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

It strikes me as odd that you still go to BLAKE'S 7 conventions. If this is something that is a painful experience, why do you want to perpetuate it by attending events which just bring the memories back?

Because I've healed a lot, a lot of time has gone by and I didn't do conventions for many years. I've only done about five in America and two in this country so I haven't done many at all. Now that it's in the past and my healing is complete I can see it with new eyes and I can take the benefits from it. I'm not going to let what happened ten years ago affect my happiness for today.

Would that ending of BLAKE'S 7 perhaps have been a time to take the change then?

I wasn't ready to then.

How long after BLAKE'S 7 was it that you acted again?

Sixteen months, during which time I was in hospital and very ill and couldn't work anyway. But at the time it hadn't occurred to me that there might be something else that I might want to do, and it's highly unlikely that I'm going to spend the rest of my life as an artist's model in Cornwall. I suspect I might spend the rest of my life in Cornwall but this is just a little interlude that's very precious and very enriching to me and I'm going to enjoy it for as long as it lasts, but I suspect that it won't be too long." ❑

● **Interviewed by Peter Linford**

● **Postscript:** *My most recent work includes Joy Gresham in Shadowlands at the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry in '92 and two films, The Contract directed by Ewan Morrison on location in Scotland, and Princess Caraboo with Kevin Kline, directed by Michael Austin and due for release May '94, both of which I shot last year.*

I'm still in Cornwall though far less frequently than I was, and still loving it passionately. This is still the interview that has given me the most pleasure.

*- **Jacqueline Pearce, Janary 1994***

1978 1981

Blake's 7

Paul Darrow

"I had three characters, all of whom looked remarkably alike - they looked like me!" - September 1986

Season One: Paul Darrow, Gareth Thomas and Michael Keating

HOW did your book Avon: A Terrible Aspect come about?

Somebody asked me at an American convention, 'What was Avon like before the series ever started?' I asked Terry Nation, who said, 'How the hell should I know!' So I said maybe we should write something, and Terry said, 'You write it, I haven't got the time!' I wrote out a brief synopsis of a story and took it to W H Allen in Britain. They were very kind, seemed to like my idea, and even took me out for a good lunch. But, for whatever reason, their enthusiasm cooled. A little later, I was in New York and approached Avon Books - a good move, I thought - and they were interested. I was treated to another good lunch! But, they said that Lyle Stuart in New Jersey published all other BLAKE'S 7 and DOCTOR WHO books and, not wanting to step on anyone's toes, they called and arranged a meeting for me. Lyle Stuart said they would publish when the book was completed from my original ideas, which they liked. I then did a play in London - *Run for Your Wife* - which paid the rent while I wrote during the day. In the end, the story was different from the original synopsis, but nobody seemed to mind. It was suggested the book should be professionally edited, because it was scientifically inaccurate in many places. In the end, though, it was released in its original form - warts and all.

You've said, if there was a movie or a series of the book, you'd like to play Avon's father.

Well I'm not stupid. I realise that I couldn't play Avon prior to the original series because I reckon he was in his thirties when he met up with Blake and, in my book, he's in his twenties. I'm too old. So, when writing the book, I didn't make the Avon you know and love the main character. I had three main characters, all of whom looked remarkably alike - they looked like me! So I can play Avon's father, uncle, or both!

I didn't know how to end the story, but I recalled that another question often posed concerned the piece of paper Avon was reading on the spaceship London in *Space Fall*. I used that as his escape plan. So, I had an ending that was also a beginning, as it were. Then I had to write about Avon from his birth and, naturally, his father became a major character. With all due respect to babies they're not too interesting until they grow up a bit and I had to find a gripping character for the first third of the book. Then Avon's mother took over. The book was in seven sections, but apart from that it didn't really have too much to do with BLAKE'S 7. It was just an adventure story set in 'outer space'. I enjoyed writing it and stuck to the character I knew. That's why the others don't appear in it!

Did you put the sex in the book to compensate for the lack of it in BLAKE'S 7?

Well, I remember Frederic Forsyth's superb novel, *The Day Of The Jackal*, and I recall reading somewhere that he was asked to put some sex into it before publication. Sex, I suppose, sells. If it was good enough for Mr. Forsyth, it was good enough for me!

You've just set up your first production company...?

Yes. Being an actor-manager gives me greater control. I'll get to direct, as well as act.

Are you branching away from acting then?

Yes, I think so, I mean, I like to act but if you can combine the two then it's marvellous.

Will you be able to play a greater range of roles...?

Not initially. The commercial element requires me to play the sort of role I'm identified with. Later on, maybe I'll branch out into new, different roles. Also, I'll direct, and to be able to combine that with acting will be marvellous.

Was it the fact that you have a solid following that persuaded you to risk your own production company?

No. I just want more control of what I do.

Are you surprised that, ten years on, the reaction to you and BLAKE'S 7 *has been sustained?*

In a way I am yet in a way I'm not. I made a conscious decision with Janet, my wife, to respond to fan mail in which case you respond to every single letter. We didn't know at the time that it was going to go into tens of thousands (that's eight thousand a year!). Also, when I started going to conventions I loved them, they were such fun. You get a few weirdoes of course but the majority, 99.999%, are really nice and interesting people. You also get to go to fairly exotic places which is really rather nice, and I think that because one could make oneself available and join in these celebrations that the popularity and loyalty has been sustained.

How do you find the American conventions compare to their British counterparts?

Very different. In the States they are very outgoing and people say what they think. Here there's more reserve, so it's more razzmatazz over there. You've only got to watch an American football game, it's more like that, whereas here it's rather like a Sunday afternoon at Lords! There is a difference and there's a place for both and they're both as enjoyable but in very different ways. I love American conventions and the majority of people - obviously there are exceptions to every rule - are so charming, friendly and giving. Say you arrive in New York, there will be somebody there who says 'I know New York, I'll show you around', and they'll show you all the best places to eat. I now know New York better than I know London, it's amazing!

What attracted you to BLAKE'S 7 *and Avon in the first place?*

Well, the first thing was money! A television series can be quite lucrative and keep you going for quite a long time. When it was first mooted I was asked to go and see the producer, David Maloney. My agent, who was a woman at the time, had told me the part was for some kind of an engineer of the future, and I asked when in the future and she said 'I don't know - go looking like an engineer!' So I went back and found out what an engineer dressed like and went like that. When I arrived David gave me four scripts and he took me to a room, gave me a cup of coffee and told me to read the scripts and tell them what I thought of the character of Avon, which they wanted me to play. I read episode one first and Avon wasn't in it, which I thought didn't bode very well! Then I read the next three and I thought, 'Hmm, I think this could be Avon's show', so when I came out I said 'Yes, I'd love to do that', and they said 'Fine, we'll be in touch'. Three months later they did get in touch.

> *"I read episode one first and Avon wasn't in it, which I thought didn't bode very well"*

The entire series is to be released on video from 1991. What do you think today's younger generation will make of it?

Well, I have two nephews of ten and twelve and they love it, absolutely love it. I get phone calls from them saying, 'Uncle Paul, when you shot so and so...', and I'm having to rack my brain trying to remember what happened. The interesting thing is you get a new generation of fans. Obviously I'm ten years older now and I'm getting people coming to the theatre of, say, twenty-five, who were fifteen when they watched it, which is amazing.

Rumours of Death saw a major turning point for the character of Avon: some would say it confirmed you as a sex symbol. Did you realise the significance of the story at the time?

No, I never consider myself as a sex symbol. Curiously enough people say that and I don't really know what they mean. I was talking to a couple of other actors, Lewis Collins and Patrick Mower, and they're sexy, and know they are, and I don't see it. I don't know what it means. Sex to me is Michelle Pfeiffer and Marilyn Monroe. I suppose there's an element of the macho thing - I was brought up in the John Wayne school of thinking that men are men and women are women.

The third season seemed to start off with Avon being more like Blake and Tarrant as the dissenting voice on board the Liberator. Did you feel that you were moving against what you had already established with the character?

Yes, very much so. They decided they would make Avon more Blake-ish and that infuriated me. I was told the Tarrant character would be older, a John Mills stiff-upper-lip type with a terrific reputation, rather like if you'd cast Sean Connery as Tarrant - imagine the respect for that kind of actor - and that kind of presence would have put Avon on his toes. But then they bring in this kid who is no competition really and I felt that that was a pity, good though Stevie was. I thought they left him a bit in the lurch. He's a nice guy and he's a good actor.

At the start of the fourth season you had no ship and no teleport and within two episodes you had both. Do you think something new should have been tried?

Yes I do. They did try in a way by making the Scorpio a bit of a rattle trap but actually it was rather sleek. The teleport was kept simply because it's quicker to get from place to place and get into the drama. But we did try to make the guns more realistic instead of the hairdryers we used earlier on. Maybe if there had been a fifth series - and I think perhaps there should have been - you'd have got a much more realistic, grainier type of show. Even so it was pretty realistic, and if you take it out of its science fiction context the characters were such that you could place them anywhere; they were The Dirty Dozen or The Magnificent Seven.

In Games and Warlord, yourself and Soolin, played by Glynis Barber, seemed to be hinting at something. Was this intentional?

Yes, it was on the writer's part because they always liked to have a bit of romance, and I decided he wasn't interested in mere girls - he only liked women. Hence his interest in Servalan I think.

What did you and Michael Keating think when you read the scripts for Orbit?

We didn't really read them straight off because we were busy filming other stuff. Anyway Robert Holmes had told us that he was going to write a cracker so I said, 'We don't need to read it now, it's *bound* to be good', and it was - it was terrific. You knew that if Bob Holmes, Terry Nation or Chris Boucher wrote it you were alright. The others you had to look at.

Were you surprised that Gareth Thomas came back for Blake?

No, he was anxious to do that because the Blake image had stuck to him and it's difficult for an actor to shake off the image, particularly if the show's still going on. He was always going to come back and the idea was that the Federation was going to kill him, and then I said, 'No, no, I think I'd like to do it'. I would have shot him in the back too but they didn't want to go that far!

Is there anything you would like to have changed in that episode?

Yes. I thought it was very well done and very well written, but if you're going to kill everybody off I think it would have been much better if you'd done it gradually throughout the season, and not in one massacre at the end. Perhaps I could have bumped off Vila in *Orbit*!

The writers must have found it something of a liability having to write for seven regulars and two computers?

That's why David (Gan) Jackson left, because there wasn't much you can do with a character like that. The girls - unless you gave them a romantic situation - had very little to do and so they became slightly dissatisfied because, of course, the best woman's part was Servalan which was written for a man!

In an interview with DWB Jacqueline Pearce blamed egos in front of and behind the camera for her having a tough time in the fourth season. Did you see any evidence of this?

I wouldn't say egos. I would say that for reasons which she can only really explain she fell foul of the writers. She's a game girl and she chewed them out a few times and I think they took their

revenge.

By not putting her in the last episode?

Yes, frankly. That's my opinion.

You did two DOCTOR WHO *stories (Doctor Who and the Silurians in 1970 and Timelash in 1985). How did they compare with doing Blake's 7?*

No comparison. The first one I did was with Johnny Pertwee, which was a laugh because he's such a funny man. The next one I did was with Colin who's a friend.

Did you notice any differences in style between the two programmes?

Yes, DOCTOR WHO was for children, BLAKE'S 7 was for adults.

What was your verdict on Timelash?

Rubbish. I thought Pennant Roberts was a good director, which is one of the reasons why I did it. It was a rubbish script though and even JNT admitted it was rubbish afterwards.

Did you deliberately send your part up?

Yes, I wanted to play it like Richard III. JNT said 'What the hell's going on here', and we had a bit of a barny but we became good friends afterwards. He said 'You were right, it was a rubbish script. You had to send it up really'!

Which of your two DOCTOR WHO*'s did you prefer?*

I had no preference, other than that I think DOCTOR WHO should be more Avon-ish, if you know what I mean. With more edge, more dangerous. Jon's swashbuckling image was good, I thought. Or, you can be eccentric, like Tom and William Hartnell. But, in this era of *Total Recall* and *Robocop*, he might be more high-tech and sleek. Sylvester reminds me of Ken Dodd. I'd like to see him played harder - like Dirty Harry.

Will there ever be a follow-up to your book?

Terry is supposed to be writing one but he's a bit dilatory. I spoke to him about three weeks ago, he hasn't been well, and I asked him how the book was coming along and he said 'Don't ask'.

Have you got one last thing you would like to say to your fans reading DWB?

Yes, I'd like to thank them for their loyalty and interest and their intelligence because I get some very interesting scripts from them. They are always pleasant to meet on tour and I always have a very happy time everywhere I go - here and in the United States. I might add it's a wonderful experience to arrive in a strange town and there, at the station or airport, is someone who's a friend. The fans have become friends." ❑

● **Interviewed by Jason Haigh-Ellery and Gary Leigh**

● **Postscript:** *In 1991, Paul formed his own company Satchel Productions and staged Gaslight and Dial M For Murder at Worthing and then developed a taste for directing with Relatively Speaking. In 1992, he played MacBeth in a 26-week tour around the country. Last year Satchel Productions staged Rough Crossing by Tom Stoppard in Liverpool with Eric Sykes.*

Recently, Paul has done several voice-overs including Peugeot and Alpha Romeo commercials and a Radio 4 documentary on volcanoes. He is currently trying his hand at writing a play.

1966 Adam Adamant Lives! 1967

Gerald Harper

"The BBC umme-d and ahhh-ed for months before they decided not to go on with it" - April 1989

Foreward: *FOR A SERIES that only ran for two seasons in 1966/7, ADAM ADAMANT LIVES! is still well remembered today. The premise of the series, like all those that stand the test of time, was simple. Adam Llewellyn De Vere Adamant, gentleman adventurer of the Victorian era, defender of King and country and respecter of women, finds himself involved in a plot so dastardly that he almost loses his life. Betrayed by the woman he loved, he was condemned to a living death; frozen in a block of ice by arch villain The Face in 1902. Sixty-four years later, in 1966, his body is recovered, and he's still alive!*

Lost in the modern world of fast cars, neon lights and miniskirts, Adam realises that there is still a need for a crime fighter. Ably assisted by his sidekicks Georgina Jones (Juliet Harmer) and butler Simms (Jack May), Adamant continued his crusade against villainy for 28 episodes, until the BBC cancelled the series despite widespread popularity.

Sydney Newman, who created the series, was also, of course, responsible for DOCTOR WHO and THE AVENGERS, both of which ADAM ADAMANT LIVES! resembled in certain aspects, and the producer was Verity Lambert, who came from producing William Hartnell's DOCTOR WHO to mastermind the career of the romantic adventurer.

The man who gave life to the central character was Gerald Harper who, when first offered the role, wasn't interested, but not because he didn't want to do it...

"THE BBC Head of Drama, Sydney Newman, outlined the story and I told him it was a great idea, but he'd have to count me out because I was under contract at the time to do a part on Broadway. The minute they believed I was unavailable they thought 'That's the guy we've *got* to have'! It was Verity Lambert who decided there and then to offer it to me. Verity had come off DOCTOR WHO and was still a new producer I'd never heard of. She'd seen THE CORSICAN BROTHERS, which I was in - I played the villain, a great swordsman - and I think that's why I was offered the part. I said 'I'm sorry, but I'm old-fashioned and I can't accept it'. They said 'You must realise it's going to be *enormous*, we're taking over THE MAN FROM UNCLE slot!' I phoned the producer on Broadway and asked him about it, and I explained it was probably going to make me famous. He was very good and said of course I must do it. It was lucky because the play on Broadway never opened - it disappeared without trace!

Sydney Newman was a man of great ideas, but he was a bit odd at times. He had this curious idea that Adam Adamant must have a widow's peak. He also thought I ought to have giant eyebrows, so at fantastic expense they had a wonderful wig and special bushy eyebrows made, which was totally unnecessary. I remember riding a white horse through Richmond Park and being followed by all those young girls from the ballet school and thinking 'So this is what it's like to be a star'. Then I heard one of them say, 'Oh, hasn't he got lovely hair', and it was the bloody wig!

"If you put a man of the ideas and the attitudes of the Victorian era down among the codes and morals of today you immediately have a classic conflict. I thought that was such a superb idea"

What appealed to me was that it was a true comedy of manners. If you put a man of the ideas and the attitudes of the Victorian era down among the codes and morals of today you immediately have a classic conflict. I thought that was such a superb idea but I don't think we did it particularly well. It was flung on incredibly fast, both in terms of the inception, which wasn't quite thought through, and in physical terms - the sheer amazing speed in which we did it which, looking back, was unbelievable. It was weekly repertory with a better dressing room!

We went into production with six scripts written, so we had to get another done in six weeks as we were making an episode a week. It was amazing how things were just thrown together in those days, in a fury of energy. We had two days in the studio, the third day out filming, with four days to learn the next script and a couple of fights, which are damn hard to learn. It was an impossible schedule. There was another series at the same time whose leading man, now a well known actor, was taken to the funny farm as he cracked under the strain.

For a one-hour programme we had about two-and-a-half-hours' recording time, we had all the sets up and recorded it straight through trying not to stop. I had a boy whose only job was to grab me as I left a scene and get me into position for the next one because I didn't know where I was going! I didn't know what scene came next. I'd just hope that the lines would come to me! It was a nightmare, really, though also hugely enjoyable.

We had a lot of fun doing all those things you're usually not allowed to do. We went down to Leicester Square at midnight and I went down the up escalator and up the down, as a guy who'd never seen an escalator before probably would. Earlier on we went to Piccadilly in the middle of the day. They hid the camera and blew a whistle and I just walked out into the middle of the road as if I'd never seen anything but Hansom cabs! I stopped the traffic and stood there and all the drivers reacted marvellously. They saw this man in evening dress waving a swordstick at them and one bus driver leant out and screamed abuse! A taxi driver put his brakes on and swept a great bow as he thought 'We've got a right one here!' We did all sorts of things like that.

The very first night of production we had to do some night filming. I had to gallop up a drive on a white horse and I remember sitting, thinking in despair, 'I don't know what I'm doing here'. I got home at half past four in the morning and almost burst into tears! I was about to appear in front of several million people instead of a few hundred in repertory theatre that I was used to, and all I could think was 'I don't know what I'm doing - this is a disaster!' It was a night of great mental crisis but it worked, although the creation of the character was very difficult because there were a lot of unknowns. It's alright if you knew who this character was supposed to be, so it was very unnerving.

> *"This bloke suggested he should pick the actress up . . . and his back went! He couldn't move. We laid him on the table and by the time we got him to hospital Verity had fired him and got Jack May in!"*

AS I RECALL, we were half way or three quarters of the way through making the first series when it started going out, and I knew it would be a success pretty soon because Frankie Howerd started making jokes using the character of Adam Adamant!

It was easy to film for the first series because they didn't know who I was or what we were doing. Afterwards it became impossible because I stood out a mile off in that great cloak with my swordstick wandering around London. I was having dinner with one of the writers after making an early episode, and he said 'Gerald, we're sitting here, but three months from now you won't be able to walk down the street without being recognised'. And he was right, that's what happened. It's amazing - it alters your life totally.

Jack May, who played my butler, Simms, was terrific, and currently soldiers on in THE ARCHERS. I know he won't mind me telling the story that he was not the first choice for the butler part. Someone else was to do the first few episodes - an unknown actor who would have made his name had he continued. We got to the read-through of the third episode and it had a joke opening where the butler had to say 'There is a lady to see you, Sir', and he's holding her in his arms because she's got a knife in her back! This bloke suggested he should pick the actress up, which he did, and his back went! He couldn't move. We laid him on the table and by the time we got him to hospital Verity had fired him and got Jack May in! I asked Verity what she was doing and she said 'We can't waste the time, we're in the studio in four days, we'll give him an episode as a visiting artiste later in the series'. I went to see him in hospital and he and his wife were so heartbroken as he'd been an actor for twenty years and this was the first time he was going to have regular work for thirteen weeks or whatever.

Jack manfully filled the breach. The character of Simms had been a music hall artiste which gave him this ability to do lots of voices and don disguises, and Jack May was superb and great fun, although he did spend most of his time on the phone to his bookmaker! He used to come in with two scripts and four copies of *The Sporting Life* and we'd rehearse in twenty minute bursts before he had to go and see who had won the 3.30! Juliet Harmer, who played my sidekick Georgina Jones, was a delight. She was a kooky, curious girl, but utterly beautiful and very nice.

The Face was played by Peter Ducrow, known as the Ice Man because of that great leather mask. I wonder what happened to him? The episode *Black Echo* was basically a remake of the Anastasia story, and The Face was there in the underground of the old lady's castle. I said 'You *must* get Gladys Cooper for this part', and the booking agent at the BBC said 'No. We just can't send this script to Dame Gladys Cooper!' I was terribly angry and said 'Listen, your job is to hire actors. You send that script to Gladys Cooper *immediately*. It's not up to you to decide, it's up to *her*!' She got the script, said 'It's delightful', and did it! She just came in, didn't get a word right, and said 'Gerald, I just don't know what this is about, I don't understand a word of it, but I think it's delightful!' She only had three-and-a-half-days - which for a woman of eighty is no time at all - to learn a big part. She never knew where she was meant to stand, but when the little red light went on she was steady as a rock, made it up as she went along and gave a wonderful and moving performance.

The fight sequences were fun. I was very fit, luckily, and a good boxer which, I think, is one of the reasons I got the part. I could fence as well. Learning fights is a long, laborious, time-consuming process, like a choreographed dance. We had one or two each week and we had to remember them. We had a lovely bunch of stuntmen including Nosher Powell, a boxer of some considerable repute who had fought professionally. We were in the studio and Nosher said 'Don't you worry, Gerald, hit me as 'ard as you like, I'll do the rest'. They called action and I caught him on the chin with a great left hook and he went down. Everybody in the studio went 'Gosh, Nosher's going to get up and murder him!' These people are very touchy, you see, and I was shaking, thinking he was going to beat me up, but he got up and said 'Gerry, you got a good punch!'

We did two series and the BBC had a long period of angst where they decided whether to go on with it. They had another series they also wanted to do and they could only go on with the one. They ummed and ahhh-ed for months before they decided not to go on with it. It was a very good thing because if I'd stayed in it for a long time I would have been stuck, like DOCTOR WHO, in Never Never Land! As it was it still stayed with me for a long time, for twenty years. It was a great cult programme that could have gone on and become hugely successful. I could've done it for eight years and never worked again.

When the series ended I went back to the theatre into a restoration comedy. After doing another play I went straight up to Yorkshire, in 1968 or early '69, to play James Hadleigh for a TV series called HADLEIGH, which I did for ten years. That started within a year of leaving ADAM ADAMANT LIVES! Between series I'd do a play in London for six months or something, and we only did six or seven series in those ten years.

I prefer working in theatre, which is the actor's true medium. Film and TV are the director's and writer's true mediums as they

decide where the audience should look and what they should see. In a theatre I go out there and it's me, and nobody but me, who does it. I get more fun down on the stage looking at the audience, it's a real kick, whereas it never was in a studio which aren't really nice places to be. The fun is in the creation. When ADAM ADAMANT LIVES! went on air, seen by millions of people, it was really a totally exhausted dress rehearsal, not a charged up performance for an audience to handle. It's quite nice once in a while to do a quiet bit of acting in an empty studio without an audience coughing, but I find that the real charge is on the stage.

I've still got the swordstick at home hanging up on the wall. When the series came to an end, the lovely make-up girl made a great thing on a piece of funeral purple cloth with little white flowers on which she embroidered those bloody eyebrows that Sydney Newman made me wear. Under it, it says in Latin, 'Here Lie the Eyebrows of Adam Adamant, 1966-67'. I've got that hanging up on the wall too!

ADAM ADAMANT LIVES! was a nice idea - this gentleman of honour surrounded by girls in mini skirts and being shot at, it's a *charming* idea. It was a very good cartoon character, almost. I just remember utter panic and exhaustion, and thinking at the end of each episode, 'Well, we've made it!'" ❏

● **Interviewed by Brian J. Robb**

● **Postscript:** *Now I can choose, I spend my time in the theatre, and I still survive! In 1990-91 I was in The Royal Buccarat Scandal at The Haymarket Theatre, and last year I finished a year's run in the West End with Murder By Misadventure. I have just played the wicked Sheriff of Nottingham in pantomime with Roy Hudd, the first one I have ever done, and I had more fun than I can remember. Can't wait till next year!* - ***Gerald Harper, January 1994***

199?

the new doctor...?

199?

Richard O'Brien

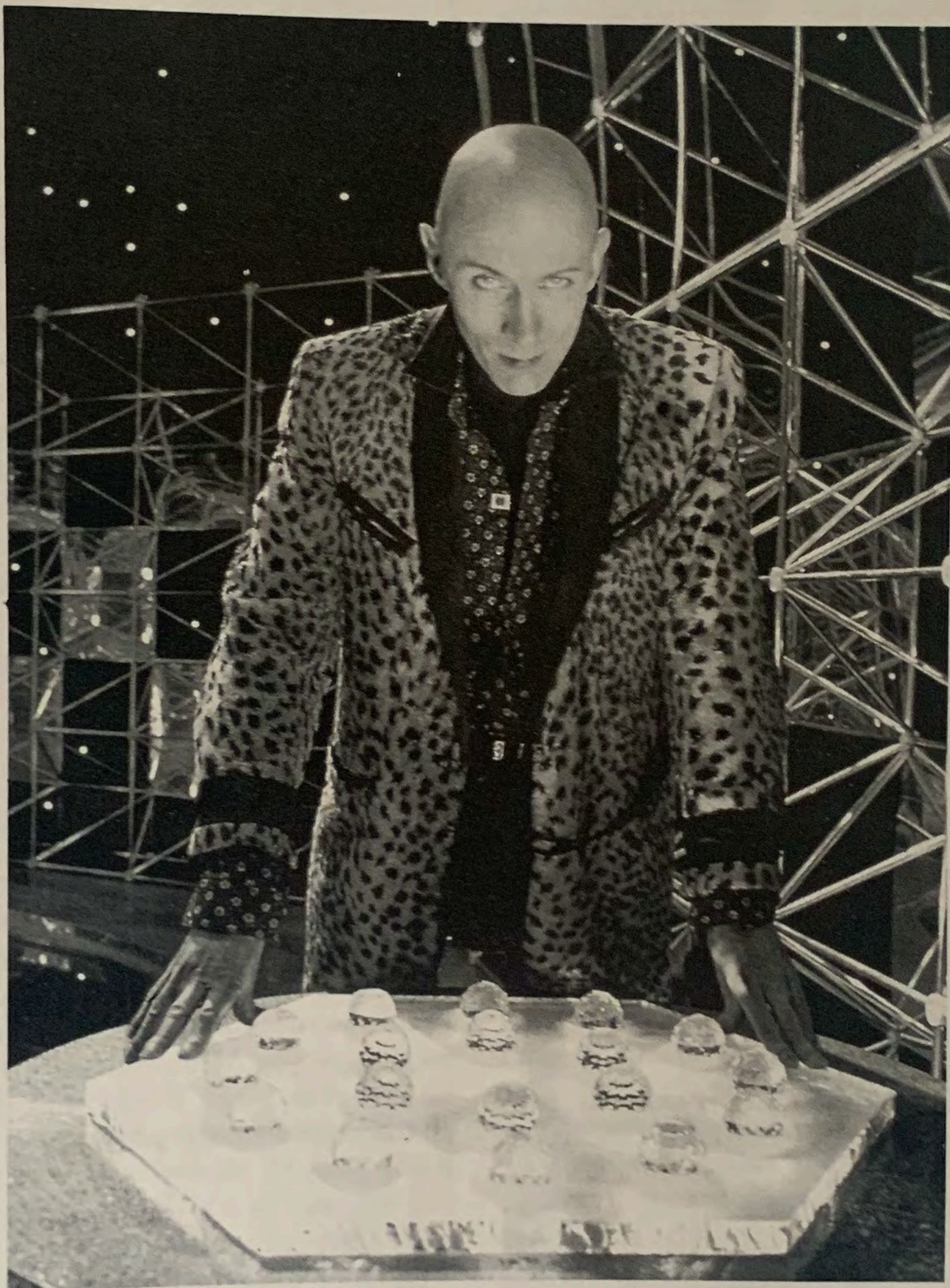
"You can call an audience whatever you want to... it's amazing how much they'll take" **- August 1990**

● *Strong language*

WHEN the West End production of The Rocky Horror Show started in 1988, you demanded that the Theatre Royal in Hanley, Stoke on Trent, halt their record-breaking four-year tour of 'Rocky'. Why didn't you like it?

Basically the production values were very low. They had a few lasers, so what? The band tried their best but there was no-one in control saying 'Let's get more' and trying to keep the whole thing together. What's good about the new one is that we've got Richard Hartley (*N.B. composer of the score for* Doctor Who*'s Mindwarp, 1986*) on board who's not only the arranger but he's also the 'ear' out front, so we have a musical director playing with the band but he can't be in two places at once!

If you are going to do a show, it's essential that the production values are high and to get it right. I hated the set for the Hanley tour (those painted canvas backdrops were ghastly, I would have burned them!). It was cheap and shoddy and smacked of amateur night out. As the tour went on the casting got sloppier and sloppier (some of it wasn't that good in the first place!). They were also casting young and relatively inexperienced people, and they allowed the audience to take over who have caused as many problems for us as anything else. Of course audiences want to shout out now that's established - and it was established well before Hanley - but Hanley turned it into a fucking pantomime! I went to see it at the Bristol Hippodrome and they actually did 'Oh yes it is...Oh no it's not...' I think, therefore, if you have wit on stage and strength - which comes from playing and experience - you can control it and the audience appreciates it more. They're like children, they know where they stand. It sounds terribly patronising to audiences, but it's true; if you go to see Barry Humphries, for instance, you appreciate the fact that he's in charge.



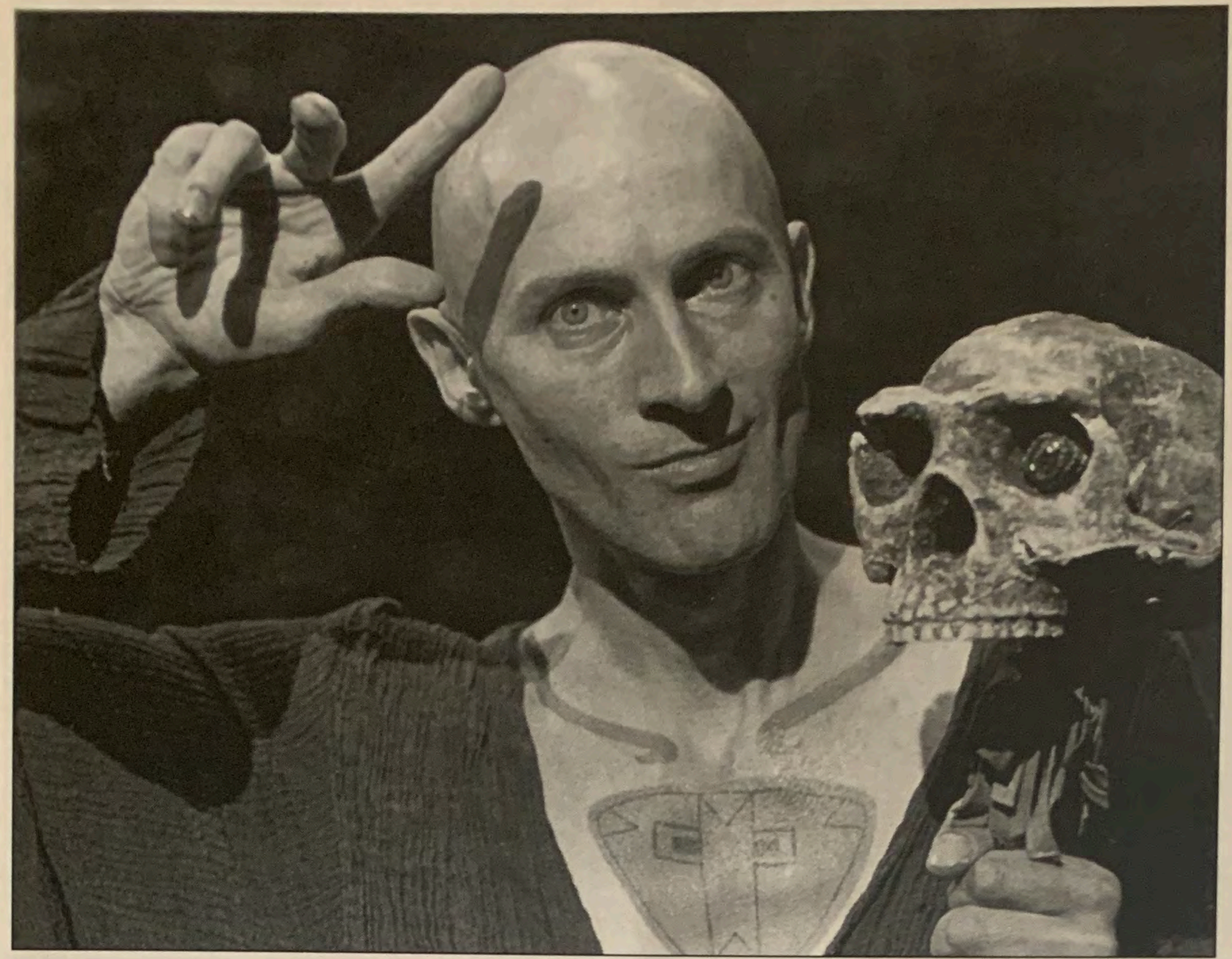
The Crystal Maze, Channel 4

So, after deciding it must close, was it a smooth path to the opening of the new Rocky?

No, no, no. It's taken us probably eighteen months to get it all together. We also had to sit down and ask what we originally had with *Rocky* in the very first production. What were the elements that made it work? It's difficult to define and we didn't want to slavishly copy what we had done before (it would be like getting all the people to come back to a second party - you just cannot recreate the spontaneity that made it work first time around), so it was a question of finding out all the things that we felt made it work and not re-create it but adjust it. One of the things we did put our finger on was the chemistry of the players when we first did it, but it wasn't a question of finding clones of those actors but discovering a cast who would work well enough together to create a new chemistry if you like. In the end I think we got the mix right.

How much input did you have then?

Well, it's produced by two people. Independent Theatre Productions and Viva Productions have come together to form 'Rocky Horror London Ltd.' and they are putting it on, they are the producers and it's their show. I, however, am a director of a company called 'Rocky Horror Ltd.', so if we like the London version we can then say we'd like to move it further on (i.e. take it on tour, take it to Europe etc.), so we can oversee everything in a first class, professional way. The amateur rights and repertory rights are already with publishers Samuel French Ltd., but if anyone wants to do it on the continent we want to know how they are going to do it and offer them a package, that is to say an artistic team. Don't get me wrong, the show is a piece of trash, but it's a piece of trash lovingly put together. If you play it as trash or take it too lightly that's all it becomes, but if you take it seriously and build all the component parts it's a nice piece of



Richard O'Brien appeared as arch-enemy Gulnar in five episodes of the final series of ROBIN OF SHERWOOD (1986)

trash. There is a difference between trash that is knowing and that which is unknowing!

You've taken some risks with actors in the new version, it isn't obvious casting.

Again it's all down to comparisons. Casting Tim McInnerny is a risk. It's always a risk with Tim every night because he's not a singer and he doesn't have any experience in that area, but that risk every night is quite nice, and it prevents comparisons. We had an awful lot of people wanting to audition for us, for the understudy parts and things, and they gave us clone-like renditions of Tim Curry and myself .

What staggers me about Rocky Horror is the atmosphere in the theatre - it's like nothing else I've ever encountered...

It's probably what theatre used to be like before it became church-like and precious. Victorians took a lot of life away from us.

...except music hall.

Yes, but that was looked upon as low life. *Rocky* is closer to pre-Victorian days of theatre than anything else. There are concerts of course, but you don't get that interaction between audience and performer. They take the adulation but it's all for them, very narcissistic. I've been playing Frank because Tim (McInnerny) has been ill and one night, when Rocky tells Frank to piss off, instead of turning on Rocky I turned on the audience. You can call an audience whatever you want to. I first of all called them reprobates, then the next night losers, then deadbeats, and finally I was saying, 'Listen up, you load of fucking deadbeats!' It's astonishing how much they'll take!

I noticed, as you enter the theatre, there is a message from the author saying, basically, ***behave!!***

No, no, I didn't want it to be parental - 'The New York rules apply'. I worked my arse off trying to get it right psychologically. *Rocky* fans say it's their right to shout out lines during the show (which I'm not going to argue about), but if so then the New York rules apply. Sal Piro (President of *The International Rocky Horror Fan Club*) always says, 'Our narrator has a neck and is definitely not boring, and anybody who says to the contrary is out, OK?', so I thought that was the best way around that one.

Truthfully, the lines they shout aren't that witty. One night whilst I was playing Frank we had one guy in the full gear with his feet up on the back of the chair who was a fucking bore, to be honest, he was just so unfunny. Use wit, not shit, is my motto.

Adrian Edmondson came out best, I felt, with the audience interplay.

He always comes off stage and says of the audience, 'They are boring tonight, their timing's all wrong!' He's a comedian so who's to argue (*laughs*)? He was asked during an interview recently, 'Adrian, is this a show for the Nineties?' He said 'No, all ages!'

There is supposed to be another Rocky Horror sequel movie soon, isn't there?

Yes, 'Revenge of the Old Queen'...in fact I'm supposed to be hearing about that soon. It's Rocky fifteen years on.

How many of the old characters do you want it to feature?

I'm not getting into that. It's like baking a cake; if you set out to bake the cake with the same ingredients it will turn out pretty much the same.

Will it be along the lines of your first sequel, Shock Treatment?

Shock Treatment is a disaster. The soundtrack of the film is great; if you listen to it you'll realise the potential the film could have had. We got sidetracked by the director, Jim Sharman, who must take complete responsibility. We should have kept to the first draft, but Jim said he didn't want to do more of the same at which point we should have said, 'Fine, go and make the kind of films you want to make and we'll carry on with the first draft!' God knows why we didn't. The new script disregards *Shock Treatment* in a way; when *Shock Treatment* comes into it it will be pretty much like Bobby's shower in Dallas.

All a dream?

Yes!

Do you think you'll be in it?

Oh yes, Riff Raff will be in it. Basically Riff is a scapegoat, he takes all the blame. I think, in many ways, it's the best part, having now played Frank and Riff. He's the one who does all the work whilst Frank wanders around sipping champagne, smoking joints and fucking people. Meanwhile Riff is the one actually doing the experiments that make Rocky and that is the undercurrent to the character, certainly when I was playing it. Frank steals all Riff Raff's glory.

You appeared in a production of Little Shoppe of Horrors, a show that was heavily influenced by Rocky?

I think we were the original in that genre, yes. That doesn't mean to say that nobody else should have a crack at it; it's rock 'n' roll theatre basically. The reason I did *Little Shoppe* was that I saw it in the West End and thought it could have been cast and directed better as an entertaining evening. Harry Towb played Mushnik and, like a lot of Jewish people, refused to play a cliché. I see nothing wrong in playing a cliché; there is a truth in all stereotypes - they don't pluck them out of thin air. I think we should milk the comedy potential out of them as much as possible. Maureen Lipman doesn't go far enough with her Jewish grandmother (Beattie). I just objected to Harry Towb walking through it, trying to avoid the stereotype and not being funny, so when I did it I tried to play up that side of things and my Jewish friends loved it. It's the same with Jonathan Pryce and this business of Miss Saigon where American Equity won't let him play an Asian - it's make believe for goodness sake! An actor can be what he wants in his make believe world. If the part was a one- legged Canadian does that mean we've got to search Canada for a one-legged actor? It's all nonsense. Would Lan Ping Yun be funnier than Peter Sellers as Dr. Fu man chu? I think not.

You did ROBIN OF SHERWOOD, *didn't you?*

Yes, I played Gulnar the Sorcerer. I did two double episodes and a single episode. That was great fun except for the single episode. The director was a piss artist and mean-spirited - a pain in the arse, I thought. He had no sense of humour and was completely...

Moderation is not your strongest point is it?

No, I'm afraid not.

Why did you decide to do THE CRYSTAL MAZE *for Channel 4?*

I did it because I thought I should raise the profile. I've had twenty years of success but nobody really knew who I was. There are advantages as well as disadvantages to that, but I felt at my time of life I should do something to get my face known and in this country it's television that gets you recognition, or as the general public would call it, 'stardom'.

Was that the sole reason?

No, I wanted to raise the profile for my charity work as well - it gives you more pulling power.

That's alcohol and drugs rehabilitation isn't it?

Yes. What I'd like to do is get all those people who enjoy an occasional drink to contribute something to those that are hooked on it and underwrite the treatment of those people so they can get back on their feet. I'm trying to persuade the producers of *Rocky* to do a midnight matinee in aid of the Chemical Dependency Centre in Redcliff Gardens, but it's complicated because front of house staff etc. still have to be paid, but we're working on it.

It would be nice to think that the many Rocky Horror fans gathering up and down the country could raise a few bob for this good cause.

Oh yes, that's an area I very much want to get into. *Rocky Horror* fans cross so many boundaries - science fiction, rock 'n' roll, theatre buffs - you name it! If anyone would care to organise an evening in aid of the CDC then I'd do my best to attend, if my commitments allow, to sing a few songs and tell a few jokes.

What does the future hold for Richard O'Brien?

Well, I'm going to do a one-man show about Mephistopheles the demon. It'll be in two distinct halves; the first half will be the backing singers doing some rock 'n' roll songs I've written, then in the second half I arrive and they fade into the background as I take over their lives. It's something that has a lot of mileage in it, I think, something I very much want to do and am going to do..."
❑

● **Interviewed by Robert Cope**

● ***In January 1994 Robert Cope caught up with Richard O'Brien as The Rocky Horror Show prepared to celebrate 21 years as a worldwide cult hit...***

"MEPHISTOPHOLES - Mephistopholes Smith as I've named him - goes out on the road this year. *Rocky Horror* is returning to the stage to celebrate 21 years and, at certain dates and on certain evenings, I will turn up as Mephistopholes and will do a forty-minute pre-show. That way I shall, that is to say *he* shall (if you can call a Demon 'he') premiere the stuff and hopefully do an album too.

The 21st anniversary tour of *The Rocky Horror Show* is going to tour the country with Jonathan Morris (from BREAD) as Frank N. Further. Patricia Quinn has kindly said she'll come back and play Magenta again for us, which is exciting. I think it will be a nice, happy celebratory tour.

Riff Raff (*The Rocky Horror Picture Show*)

In retrospect we had built in problems with the 1990-91 West End production. We started so well, the pre-bookings were incredibly good. Then we got to about three months into the run and the Gulf War started and the tourists refused to fly in, and then we had one of the heaviest snow storms in London! So what with that and the economy suddenly taking a dip - in fact the whole of the West End took a dip - everybody was struggling. Even the very big shows which were considered to be automatic smashes were holding their own by underwriting the lean period, but we weren't able to do that. The Piccadilly Theatre is notorious as well for being unlucky, I don't know why. Some theatres succeed and others have a job and, alas, the Piccadilly is one of those.

There is no chance that I'll return as Riff Raff, not on stage anyway. I went out and did Frank two years ago and it was nice to put the heels on because he's got all the best songs and jokes. It is therefore easier to play that part because you can ride on that, but I'm getting a bit too old for all that now you know (I'm nearly 52!).

Revenge of the Old Queen - the sequel to *Rocky Horror* - is on hold. The person who commissioned it - Joe Roth at 20th Century-Fox - has since moved on to Walt Disney. What happens is that the incoming president always clears the desk if nothing has been firmly committed and brings in new ideas and new projects (they don't like to inherit projects), so there is a possibility that it may surface next year - the 21st anniversary of the movie.

I've now abandoned THE CRYSTAL MAZE. I felt that after four series I wasn't really being any different. The growth was gone and I'd done as much as I could so I wasn't really giving the audience much more of myself. I wasn't doing any of us any favours, it was time to move on. I've just become a television commercials director. I've directed two for Hula-Hoops, which was an interesting departure from my usual work.

The celebration of joy is what I'm about this year. '94 is going to be an excellent year for lots and lots of people simply because '93 was so bloody awful! I really think '94 is optimistic, we have got to a stage where we are going to have to look at the real values around the country and get things right. The Government has inherited the Thatcher years which were awful and it's edged out the last few years, but now it has got to pull it's finger out. I just think that 1994 is going to be a positive year...to quote the show, 'Don't dream it - *be* it!'"

Best of the Rest

A summary of the other major interviews that featured in the first 100 issues of DWB

1977 1981

the sixth floor

Graeme McDonald

“I PRODUCED Play for Today - which grew out of The Wednesday Play and was the flagship play strand on BBC1 - with Irene Shubik for three years. I was very, very proud of that.

...I never understood the Doctor Who stories, really! The great difficulty is that you judge programmes as Head of Drama Series and Serials before they are dubbed and so a great element was absent when I viewed the episodes.

...Doctor Who was a bedrock part of the schedule. It had always been successful, but with Tom it was very much on a winning streak.

...It was true that Philip (*Hinchcliffe*) liked stronger meat than certainly Graham (*Williams*) would have liked. I had no contact with Mary Whitehouse whatsoever. You make your own judgements and we were acting entirely from those.

...I don’t remember the pressure on Doctor Who at the time being very strong. I think the last series (*Season 22*) contained material that I would never have passed, but I would have spotted that at script stage. I was very startled at what I saw. There were sequences that were sort of sado-masochistic, as far as I could see. I think there were misjudgements at that time. It’d be impossible to say whether they’ve been running out of ideas because I don’t know.

..John was made a producer in 1979, and the fact that the producer’s job on Doctor Who then became vacant was coincidental. I know that John was one of the keenest and the most ardent fans of the series, and therefore I think that his continuing interest in being the producer is of great value.

...You can’t just hurl a novice in to do Doctor Who. I never regarded it as nursery slopes. I always made sure that the producers and the directors were the best that I could find.

...I certainly don’t think that the Australian girl was a successful idea. I never really knew why John did it, except to overtly woo the Australian interest.

...Matters of taste one would deal with, just as with every programme one views. One would say, ‘I don’t believe that’s tenable’, or, ‘I wouldn’t have that in’, or, ‘I don’t think that’s the best moment to leave that scene or to arrive at that scene’, and so on. It’s a very detailed discussion that you have with the producer.

...I was not in any way concerned with the decision to move the series away from Saturday. At the time it seemed to me that one was losing a national habit, but then it’s very difficult to change anything on British television or radio without upsetting people. Both Shaun Sutton and I fought not to move it because it was an institution, but we might really have been over-conservative.

...I thought Peter Davison was an inspired choice. I would never have thought of him myself and I was very happy about that idea. Choosing a new Doctor Who (there was a time when Tom was going to leave and we had to persuade him to stay) is an ever-present nightmare in that job. I guess that John would have known that Peter would only do it for a limited time.

...I think my greatest achievement was the fact that I had appointed Jonathan Powell as producer and watched his rise to take over the Drama Department after David Reid. I think that’s the achievement that springs to mind at the moment, especially with his successes at BAFTA with Edge of Darkness et al.

...I think around three years is a good time for a producer on any programme: you take a year to really understand the detail of the job in any television function; the second year you are more than beginning to and you are influencing it; and in the third year you can consolidate that. In the fourth year there’s the danger that you get bored or complacent.” ❑

● *Graeme McDonald was Head of Drama Series and Serials.*

1963 1967

the costumes

Daphne Dare

“I STAYED at the BBC for about four years, two of which were designing costumes for Doctor Who. I actually worked on it from the very first story, overlapping with Maureen Heneghan to get to know all the principle people involved.

...I liked the mixture of futuristic and historical stories, though the historicals were more of a challenge regarding costume detail. I’ve just seen *The Aztecs* (*1964*) again after all these years and it brought back some wonderful memories. All the costumes were specially made, as opposed to from stock or brought in from costumiers.

..We were working at such a frantic rate in those days - I hardly had time to stop and breath. You usually had two lots of scripts at the same time to work on. I certainly enjoyed the longer stories best because they gave me more leeway. Usually you were given guidelines by the director, and you would work closely with the set designer, particularly on the futuristic ones, because the materials used in the various sets sometimes had to match in with the costumes.

...The Voord (*The Keys of Marinus*) was my first work with the Lovells, who were wonderful. The main bodies were basically black rubber diving suits and I designed the heads which they then produced, individually to scale for each actor to ensure, for example, that the eyes would be in proportion with everything else. It was always the script that inspired my imagination and the Lovells would build straight from my design, but if they found something that was technically impossible they would obviously suggest alternative ideas. For something like the Sensorites (*The Sensorites*) I worked closely with the make-up artists. The script portrayed them as very brainy beings, hence their huge heads!

...The Monoids (*The Ark, 1966*) are a classic example of a monster that sort of came together on the day! We had such little time to

practise the make-up and putting things together. The actors would always put the costume on at the very last moment before rushing onto the set so that they were less likely to faint or expire!
...DOCTOR WHO occupies a fond place in my affections because it really was so enjoyable and everyone involved with it were so nice and keen." **- August 1989** ❑

1963 1972

the musicians

Tristram Cary

"I WAS doing my pioneering work in electronic music in 1948 (I used to build my own synthesisers), and cut my teeth in radio. My first feature film was *The Ladykillers* with Alec Guinness.
...In 1963 Rex Tucker said, 'Will you do some music for this new science fiction series for kids?' A little later he called to say, 'Forget about that, someone else is doing Serial A'. If I had done it I would have done the title music too.
...I was sent a script for the second story (*The Daleks, 1963*), which called for an all electronic score. It was deliberate that the Dalek 'music' I did - *The Daleks, The Daleks' Master Plan* (*1965*) and *The Power of the Daleks* (*1966*) - wasn't thematic. I didn't really take the Daleks seriously enough to feel they needed a consistent development. I did quite a lot of the sound effects too, including the heartbeats.
...I'm credited with about eight DOCTOR WHOs, but on at least two of those they used previous tracks because they hadn't enough money to commission new music. They chopped it about a bit but I didn't mind because it was non-synch atmospheric music.
...Rex thought it would be a good idea to have a nice ballad for *The Gunfighters* (*1966*), which we got Lynda Baron to sing - it was great fun! The Last Chance Saloon was my favourite score for the series. The most complete score, ideas-wise, was *Marco Polo* (*1964*) which I tried to get some historical grandeur into.
...There was a gap before I was asked to do *The Mutants* (*1972*). There were times when I could have done with a bit more work on DOCTOR WHO, but I think producers were feeling that I was getting too expensive.
...The later ones I've seen, with the electronic machinery, has gotten more 'zippier', but I think that's probably the wrong way to go. When somebody says 'I didn't really notice the music', it is a compliment because music shouldn't be intrusive. The modern keyboard and computer synthesiser is definitely a tune-oriented thing, and the way we were doing things in the Sixties - by cutting tape and so forth - was really a different technique altogether."
- March 1988 ❑

1967 1969

the producers

Peter Bryant

"I BECAME an associate producer on DOCTOR WHO with *The Faceless Ones* (*1967*), then I was allowed to do *The Tomb of the Cybermen* on my own, although Innes Lloyd was around all the time. You trailed the programme for a long time and were expected to learn all about it. The real problems were getting the stories to meet the budget.
...The first story I produced -*The Web of Fear* (*1968*) - was so well acted by the UNIT people that we used them again in *The Invasion*. Dougie Camfield was the best director that I ever worked with. Indeed, I think he was the best director who ever worked on the programme.
...There was the occasion when a mother wrote to say that her son loved the programme but was absolutely terrified, so I got him into the studio and got one of the Cybermen to take his head off. The little boy roared with laughter and was fine thereafter.
...I don't recall any talk of cancellation. When we knew that Patrick was going I originally asked Ron Moody but he didn't want to do it, so I got Jon. It was his versatility that attracted me particularly. He could sing, dance, play the guitar, do silly voices, be funny...all the things which I thought would make an interesting new Doctor Who. In the end, of course, he played it straight, which was a pity. The then new Head of Series and Serials, Ronnie Marsh, had other ideas and didn't see the characterisation the way I did. Had I stayed on I would have done battle with him for it to be played my way, and I think I would have won.
...DOCTOR WHO was a damn sight better than what's going on at the moment. It was straightforward, narrative storylines, lots of tension, lots of thrills and chills. Today's stories are not all that easy to follow and no real excitement. I think the character of Doctor Who himself went off the rails with Peter Davison who was too bland. You have to have authority, and I didn't feel that Peter had that." **- October 1989** ❑

1971 1975

the villains

Michael Wisher

"REX FARREL - wimp extraordinary! He thoroughly deserved his rather sticky end in *Terror of the Autons* (*1971*)! When they peeled the Master's mask off I really *did* look dead because I'd been kept hanging around in this damn rubber mask all morning before they got to my scene!
...There had been a sort of circus of voices for the Daleks and they couldn't get hold of one of the usual people. Somebody rang me in panic and said, 'Can you do a Dalek?', and I said in a Daleky voice, 'Of course I can!' He said, 'You've got the job!'
...Someone else was earmarked for Davros, but eventually they decided to have me as I'd done Dalek voices. When acting in a mask you've really got to pay attention to that mask. When you change the shape of your face, very often the shape of your voice changes as well and the face changes everything about the character, and when it's a mask you just take that one stage further.
...I would sit in a wheelchair with a Sainsbury's plastic bag over my head, my theory being that without the bag I might have detracted concentration from my voice. The only way I could move was to wear a kilt - trousers tended to raise my voice an octave! I had to wear gym shoes and paddle like mad with my feet across the studio as quietly as possible!
...The whole script was superb! My goodness, it really was a corker, and what a cast! There wasn't a dud scene in it at all. I remember a piece of dialogue to this day between Peter Miles and Dennis Chinnery; it was electric, utterly electric! I don't think there has been such a good Dalek story since. I hate the new-style mask - it just doesn't do justice to the character of Davros.
...One of the best showmen I've met is John Nathan-Turner. My god, he could sell *anything*, but I don't think his ten years on the

programme was the happiest time in his life, which I think reflected itself in the programme overall." - **June 1990** ❑

1980 1984

the directors

Peter Grimwade

"*Full Circle* was quite fun to do. Chris Bidmead lives to strive for new ideas, and in commissioning Andrew Smith he also took on an awful lot of work involving rewriting and reshaping of the script. I had to put a lot of hard work into it too.

...On *Logopolis* there was an underlying element of sadness throughout. I think BBC producers are quite often frightened by very charismatic actors, so perhaps the feeling on John Nathan-Turner's part was that life would be so much easier if Tom was to leave. Tom really pushed his ideas forward, which was one of the lovely things about working with him. He was a mass of energy.

...I enjoyed *Kinda* and found it interesting, though I was very worried during the production that the Doctor was not the central figure, and *Earthshock* was extremely enjoyable to direct, albeit very, very complex. Getting a rhythm and continuity through those very short sequences was so complex that, wherever possible, I used sound effects during the run-through so that the actors knew what the short sequences sounded like on the finished take. I was very happy with the way the entire programme turned out.

...I then turned my hand to writing for the series. I think *Time-Flight* turned out very substandard, and Ian Chesterton, one of the original companions, was the original candidate for a return visit in *Mawdryn Undead*, hence the boys' school setting.

...*Planet of Fire* was just an excuse for the producer to take his team on a gang-bang and a nice holiday! It didn't work at all, it's as simple as that. You don't just commission a story and set it in Lanzarote just because you want a bloody holiday! That just doesn't make good economic sense, but there you are! Very often I see my work on the screen all buggered up, but that's a fact of life!

I did submit one more script after *Planet of Fire* but it was deemed too expensive to realise. When it was turned down I decided to look to the future away from DOCTOR WHO and to do different work." - **March 1990** ❑

1983 1986

vfx designer

Mike Kelt

"THE FIRST JOB I had as a VFX designer at the BBC was building a Dalek which exploded in *Destiny of the Daleks (1979)*.

...*Enlightenment* (*1983*) cried out for money to be spent on the model stuff. We got hold of some very old models of some of the ships which we used. For Enlightenment itself I thought you couldn't very well have 'a harbour in space', so I deliberately made it a bit ephemeral and out of focus for mystery.

...I then redesigned the TARDIS console for *The Five Doctors*. Basically I was so pissed-off with the crap it was before, and it took a couple of years to persuade them to spend the money. We had to keep the basic idea that it was hexagonal and keep in the door-handle, which we changed away from the red 'lollipop'.

...I built the lifesize version of Drathro (*The Mysterious Planet*, *1986*) on top of a replica of the actor himself who, at the last moment, pulled out. One of the guys from the department did the rest! The Time Lord spaceship was started by carving up a type of styrene foam to a sixth of the finished size, then cast up in fibreglass, multiplied by six, joined together, and then all the detail was added to it.

...The script called for an even more complicated shot than we actually did, with wrecks of spaceships floating gratuitously around. It was all done with computers and, I think, too sophisticated and complicated. We had to cut all sorts of corners but we did it. It could have been better. The motion-control people said they reckoned it was the most complicated motion-controlled move that had ever been shot in Britain - if not in the world! We had horrendous problems getting it to work.

...There is nobody in the BBC who can light a model. I haven't found one yet. I never feel happy with any of the sci-fi we do at the BBC because it is never done properly. The nearest it has come is this space station for DOCTOR WHO, but even that had compromises made to it to make it work." - **June 1986** ❑

1984 1986

the companions

Nicola Bryant

"I BASED Peri's accent on the East Coast of the States where I lived for a while, and on most of my friends there.

...I thought Peri's first two stories were very good, then I was stuck within the same mould for the next season as the writers didn't do anything with the character.

...In *The Caves of Androzani* (*1984*) we were trying to make it look hot and it was absolutely freezing! The annoying thing is that when you watch it it does look quite warm! On the other hand, in Spain (*The Two Doctors*, *1985*), when we were fighting a temperature of 115°, we were trying to look energized but we all felt really wiped-out from the heat.

...I think the one contention I probably have is costumes for the assistants. It's sort of trying to be 'sexy' and doesn't really come off. It's really up to the designer, and John Nathan-Turner of course. I consider that having a primitive woman dressed in leather skins to be far more provocative than the kind of thing I go around in!

...The audience figures were good, contrary to one of the arguments for taking it away. I just could not believe or understand it because we had the scripts, we had plans for the next season. There didn't seem to be anyone asking 'Why?', and anyone getting the right response back. It's difficult when you are in the show because you can't voice your own opinion the way you would like to.

...The BBC didn't inform myself or Colin beforehand. First of all, *The Daily Mirror* rang me and said, 'Could you comment on the death of DOCTOR WHO?'. I'd just got back from holiday and I thought Colin had been killed!

...I don't know if I would bare all, certainly not for modelling. It would totally and utterly depend on the script and what you were doing, at the right place and the right time. Personally, I think there's too much of it, so it would have to be totally justified in my mind." - **September 1985** ❑

During its first ten years of publication, the award-winning DreamWatch Bulletin published some of the most thorough and, at times, eye-opening interviews with a host of British telefantasy names from both in front of and behind the camera. This follow-up to the critically acclaimed **The DWB Compendium** contains the finest of those interviews under one cover.

Entertainingly re-edited and updated - many by the interviewees themselves - **The DWB Interview File** will provide hours of enjoyable and informative reading, beautifully illustrated with many previously unpublished photographs and professional artwork.

Includes: the complete story of **Doctor Who,** chronologically told by many of its contributors over the years, from its creator Sydney Newman through to the most recent screen Doctor, Sylvester McCoy; the lead actors from **Blake's 7** who discuss the sometimes tense atmosphere behind the scenes of this endearingly popular series; Gerald Harper on the ill-fated Sixties series **Adam Adamant Lives!** **plus** Richard O'Brien on 21 years of **Rocky Horror...**

Also available in this volume:
The DWB Compendium
A fully revised and updated collection of the very best reference material from the first 100 issues of DWB, including *The Power of the Daleks* Photonovel, *Return of the Cybermen*, the definitive guide to **Doctor Who** in the archives, the complete **Blakes 7** merchandise guide, and much more...

"A veritable pot-pourri of information...a fascinating read"
Marvel's DWM

The DWB Interview File

The Best of the First 100 Issues No. 2

Introduction

ONE HUNDRED ISSUES in the making, *The DWB Interview File* has taken four solid months to prune, update and locate new and interesting photographs, making it an indispensable and worthy successor to *The DWB Compendium*. I hope you'll agree the wait has been worthwhile.

Of the many interviews conducted exclusively for DWB during its first decade, I have selected those which I felt - after a good deal of soul-searching! - are among the very finest, as well as an all-new bonus interview with Carole Ann Ford! Much had to be shed, regrettably (along with the intended inclusion of *Roger Delgado - A Tribute*), prompting the possibility of a third volume which would also take in some of the best articles penned by our contributors over the years (keep watching the pages of DWB for details...).

One of the most enjoyable aspects of compiling this book was getting reacquainted with various of the featured artists, many of whom were only too happy to update their respective sections. Our exhaustive hunt for fresh pictorial material also proved to be immensely satisfying, as these pages will demonstrate.

In an effort to tighten up the textual content, many of the interviews are presented as dialogues (i.e. the original questions have been removed and some of the interviews re-edited slightly to ensure that the words flow). I hope this has been achieved competently enough to prevent you spotting the joins! Please note that since DWB is, first and foremost, a television-based journal, only programme titles are highlighted in Reduced Capitals. Episode titles, feature films, stage plays etc. are in *italics*.

Enjoy! - ***Gary Leigh, March 1994.***

Acknowledgements

In the prepartion of this book, I would like to thank each of the following for generously providing their time to ensure that the content and depth is as complete and accurate as possible: *Anthony Ainley, Christopher Barry, J. Jeremy Bentham, Ian Stuart Black, Michael E. Briant, Peter Bryant, Tristram Cary, Anthony Clark, Tony Clark, Robert Cope, Daphne Dare, Paul Darrow, Terrance Dicks, Carole Ann Ford, Mervyn Haisman, Elaine at Hulton Deutsch, Gerald Harper, Louise Jameson, Robert Jewell, Dallas Jones, Michael Keating, Katy Manning, Richard O'Brien, Jacqueline Pearce, Andrew Pixley, Colin and Richard at Reprographic, Adrian Rigelsford, William Russell, Ian Scoones, John Scott Martin, Nabil Shaban, Dudley Simpson, Lalla Ward, Deborah Watling, and all of the people and companies credited overleaf.*

This book is dedicated to the memory of Graham Williams

Contents

Sydney Newman 5
William Russell 16
Carole Ann Ford 18
Christopher Barry 23
Robert Jewell & Kevin Manser 28
Ian Stuart Black 35
Gerry Davis 39
Alexandra (Sandra Reid) Tynan 46
Jack and John Lovell 51
Mervyn Haisman 54
Innes Lloyd 57
Deborah Watling 60
Bernard Bresslaw 63
Jon Pertwee 65
Katy Manning 72
Kenneth Sharp 75
Terrance Dicks 78
Michael E. Briant 84
Ian Scoones 88
Tom Baker 94
Louise Jameson 99
Graham Williams 101
Dudley Simpson 108
Lalla Ward 113
Anthony Ainley 117
Eric Saward 121
Graeme Harper 128
Colin Baker 133
Nabil Shaban 142
John Nathan-Turner 146
Sylvester McCoy 149
John Scott Martin 153
Milton Subotsky 158
Gareth Thomas 162
Michael Keating 164
Jacqueline Pearce 165
Paul Darrow 171
Gerald Harper 174
Richard O'Brien 177
The Best of the Rest: 180
Graeme McDonald, Daphne Dare, Tristram Cary, Peter Bryant, Michael Wisher, Peter Grimwade, Mike Kelt, Nicola Bryant

THE DWB INTERVIEW FILE
The Best of the First 100 Issues No. 2

ISBN 0 9522307 1 2

Compiled and edited by Gary Leigh
Interior design and layout by Brian J. Robb
Cover design by Gary Wales (Profile Ltd., Woking, Surrey)

Publication copyright © 1994 Gary Leigh

Photographs © The Author's Collection, Christopher Barry,
Marion Breeze, Channel 4, Raymond Cusick, Carole Ann Ford, Robert Jewell,
Richard Molesworth, Ian Scoones, Paul Vanezis,
Hulton Deutsch Collection, Rex Features,
Topham Picture Source, Alexandra Tynan, Press Association,
The Cambridge Evening News.

Artwork © Phil Bevan, Andy Walke., Johnny Waudby.

Every effort has been made to trace the copyright holders of the illustrative material herein. In the event that we may have overlooked a clearance, we will be happy to rectify the situation.

Published in Great Britain by DreamWatch Publishing,
PO Box 1015, Brighton BN2 2YU.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission in writing of the Publisher.

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
The Reprographic Centre Ltd., Crawley, W. Sussex.

A catalogue record for this book is available from
The British Library.

● ALSO AVAILABLE IN THIS VOLUME: ***The DWB Compendium*****, a compilation of the very best reference material from the first one hundred issues of the award-winning** ***DreamWatch Bulletin*****, fully revised, updated and beautifully illustrated with professional standard artwork and previously unpublished photographs. 136 pages, eight in full colour.**

To order your copy, send a crossed cheque or postal order payable to DreamWatch Publishing for £11.99 (inclusive of p+p) to: ***The DWB Compendium, PO Box 1015, Brighton BN2 2YU.*** **(A limited hardbound edition of 250 numbered and signed copies - complete with linen finish, dust jacket and embossed in silver - are available at £16.99 each).**

Additional copies of ***The DWB Interview File*** **are available at £13.99, or £18.99 for one of 500 signed, hardbound editions. Both hardbound editions are available at the special, inclusive rate of £34.**

● TO SUBSCRIBE to ***DreamWatch Bulletin*** **for one year (12 issues), send a crossed cheque or postal order payable to DWB for £33 (£36 for card-reinforced envelopes mailed first-class) to:** ***DWB Subscriptions, 5 Whitegate Gardens, Harrow-Weald, Middlesex HA3 6BW.*** **[OVERSEAS: America and Canada $69 ($79 for card envelopes) US$ checks only; Australia and New Zealand £42 (£49) sterling only; Ireland and rest of Europe £35 (£39) sterling only. All overseas subscription issues sent Airmail within one week of publication.]**

● SPECIAL OFFER: If you would like to sample DWB, send a cheque/PO for £15 and five 1st class stamps and receive £25 worth of back issues, including the latest issue. To qualify for this offer, simply state where and when you purchased this book, and whether or not you are a new reader. Orders to the above address.

Best of the Rest

A summary of the other major interviews that featured in the first 100 issues of DWB

1977 1981

the sixth floor

Graeme McDonald

“I PRODUCED PLAY FOR TODAY - which grew out of THE WEDNESDAY PLAY and was the flagship play strand on BBC1 - with Irene Shubik for three years. I was very, very proud of that.

...I never understood the DOCTOR WHO stories, really! The great difficulty is that you judge programmes as Head of Drama Series and Serials before they are dubbed and so a great element was absent when I viewed the episodes.

...DOCTOR WHO was a bedrock part of the schedule. It had always been successful, but with Tom it was very much on a winning streak.

...It was true that Philip (*Hinchcliffe*) liked stronger meat than certainly Graham (*Williams*) would have liked. I had no contact with Mary Whitehouse whatsoever. You make your own judgements and we were acting entirely from those.

...I don't remember the pressure on DOCTOR WHO at the time being very strong. I think the last series (*Season 22*) contained material that I would never have passed, but I would have spotted that at script stage. I was very startled at what I saw. There were sequences that were sort of sado-masochistic, as far as I could see. I think there were misjudgements at that time. It'd be impossible to say whether they've been running out of ideas because I don't know.

..John was made a producer in 1979, and the fact that the producer's job on DOCTOR WHO then became vacant was coincidental. I know that John was one of the keenest and the most ardent fans of the series, and therefore I think that his continuing interest in being the producer is of great value.

...You can't just hurl a novice in to do DOCTOR WHO. I never regarded it as nursery slopes. I always made sure that the producers and the directors were the best that I could find.

...I certainly don't think that the Australian girl was a successful idea. I never really knew why John did it, except to overtly woo the Australian interest.

...Matters of taste one would deal with, just as with every programme one views. One would say, ‘I don't believe that's tenable’, or, ‘I wouldn't have that in’, or, ‘I don't think that's the best moment to leave that scene or to arrive at that scene’, and so on. It's a very detailed discussion that you have with the producer.

...I was not in any way concerned with the decision to move the series away from Saturday. At the time it seemed to me that one was losing a national habit, but then it's very difficult to change anything on British television or radio without upsetting people. Both Shaun Sutton and I fought not to move it because it was an institution, but we might really have been over-conservative.

...I thought Peter Davison was an inspired choice. I would never have thought of him myself and I was very happy about that idea. Choosing a new DOCTOR WHO (there was a time when Tom was going to leave and we had to persuade him to stay) is an ever-present nightmare in that job. I guess that John would have known that Peter would only do it for a limited time.

...I think my greatest achievement was the fact that I had appointed Jonathan Powell as producer and watched his rise to take over the Drama Department after David Reid. I think that's the achievement that springs to mind at the moment, especially with his successes at BAFTA with EDGE OF DARKNESS et al.

...I think around three years is a good time for a producer on any programme: you take a year to really understand the detail of the job in any television function; the second year you are more than beginning to and you are influencing it; and in the third year you can consolidate that. In the fourth year there's the danger that you get bored or complacent.” ❑

● *Graeme McDonald was Head of Drama Series and Serials.*

1963 1967

the costumes

Daphne Dare

“I STAYED at the BBC for about four years, two of which were designing costumes for DOCTOR WHO. I actually worked on it from the very first story, overlapping with Maureen Heneghan to get to know all the principle people involved.

...I liked the mixture of futuristic and historical stories, though the historicals were more of a challenge regarding costume detail. I've just seen *The Aztecs* (*1964*) again after all these years and it brought back some wonderful memories. All the costumes were specially made, as opposed to from stock or brought in from costumiers.

..We were working at such a frantic rate in those days - I hardly had time to stop and breath. You usually had two lots of scripts at the same time to work on. I certainly enjoyed the longer stories best because they gave me more leeway. Usually you were given guidelines by the director, and you would work closely with the set designer, particularly on the futuristic ones, because the materials used in the various sets sometimes had to match in with the costumes.

...The Voord (*The Keys of Marinus*) was my first work with the Lovells, who were wonderful. The main bodies were basically black rubber diving suits and I designed the heads which they then produced, individually to scale for each actor to ensure, for example, that the eyes would be in proportion with everything else. It was always the script that inspired my imagination and the Lovells would build straight from my design, but if they found something that was technically impossible they would obviously suggest alternative ideas. For something like the Sensorites (*The Sensorites*) I worked closely with the make-up artists. The script portrayed them as very brainy beings, hence their huge heads!

...The Monoids (*The Ark, 1966*) are a classic example of a monster that sort of came together on the day! We had such little time to

practise the make-up and putting things together. The actors would always put the costume on at the very last moment before rushing onto the set so that they were less likely to faint or expire!
...Doctor Who occupies a fond place in my affections because it really was so enjoyable and everyone involved with it were so nice and keen." **- August 1989** ❑

1963 1972

the musicians

Tristram Cary

"I WAS doing my pioneering work in electronic music in 1948 (I used to build my own synthesisers), and cut my teeth in radio. My first feature film was *The Ladykillers* with Alec Guinness.
...In 1963 Rex Tucker said, 'Will you do some music for this new science fiction series for kids?' A little later he called to say, 'Forget about that, someone else is doing Serial A'. If I had done it I would have done the title music too.
...I was sent a script for the second story (*The Daleks, 1963*), which called for an all electronic score. It was deliberate that the Dalek 'music' I did - *The Daleks, The Daleks' Master Plan* (*1965*) and *The Power of the Daleks* (*1966*) - wasn't thematic. I didn't really take the Daleks seriously enough to feel they needed a consistent development. I did quite a lot of the sound effects too, including the heartbeats.
...I'm credited with about eight Doctor Whos, but on at least two of those they used previous tracks because they hadn't enough money to commission new music. They chopped it about a bit but I didn't mind because it was non-synch atmospheric music.
...Rex thought it would be a good idea to have a nice ballad for *The Gunfighters* (*1966*), which we got Lynda Baron to sing - it was great fun! The Last Chance Saloon was my favourite score for the series. The most complete score, ideas-wise, was *Marco Polo* (*1964*) which I tried to get some historical grandeur into.
...There was a gap before I was asked to do *The Mutants* (*1972*). There were times when I could have done with a bit more work on Doctor Who, but I think producers were feeling that I was getting too expensive.
...The later ones I've seen, with the electronic machinery, has gotten more 'zippier', but I think that's probably the wrong way to go. When somebody says 'I didn't really notice the music', it is a compliment because music shouldn't be intrusive. The modern keyboard and computer synthesiser is definitely a tune-oriented thing, and the way we were doing things in the Sixties - by cutting tape and so forth - was really a different technique altogether."
- March 1988 ❑

1967 1969

the producers

Peter Bryant

"I BECAME an associate producer on Doctor Who with *The Faceless Ones* (*1967*), then I was allowed to do *The Tomb of the Cybermen* on my own, although Innes Lloyd was around all the time. You trailed the programme for a long time and were expected to learn all about it. The real problems were getting the stories to meet the budget.
...The first story I produced -*The Web of Fear* (*1968*) - was so well acted by the UNIT people that we used them again in *The Invasion.* Dougie Camfield was the best director that I ever worked with. Indeed, I think he was the best director who ever worked on the programme.
...There was the occasion when a mother wrote to say that her son loved the programme but was absolutely terrified, so I got him into the studio and got one of the Cybermen to take his head off. The little boy roared with laughter and was fine thereafter.
...I don't recall any talk of cancellation. When we knew that Patrick was going I originally asked Ron Moody but he didn't want to do it, so I got Jon. It was his versatility that attracted me particularly. He could sing, dance, play the guitar, do silly voices, be funny...all the things which I thought would make an interesting new Doctor Who. In the end, of course, he played it straight, which was a pity. The then new Head of Series and Serials, Ronnie Marsh, had other ideas and didn't see the characterisation the way I did. Had I stayed on I would have done battle with him for it to be played my way, and I think I would have won.
...Doctor Who was a damn sight better than what's going on at the moment. It was straightforward, narrative storylines, lots of tension, lots of thrills and chills. Today's stories are not all that easy to follow and no real excitement. I think the character of Doctor Who himself went off the rails with Peter Davison who was too bland. You have to have authority, and I didn't feel that Peter had that." **- October 1989** ❑

1971 1975

the villains

Michael Wisher

"REX FARREL - wimp extraordinary! He thoroughly deserved his rather sticky end in *Terror of the Autons* (*1971*)! When they peeled the Master's mask off I really *did* look dead because I'd been kept hanging around in this damn rubber mask all morning before they got to my scene!
...There had been a sort of circus of voices for the Daleks and they couldn't get hold of one of the usual people. Somebody rang me in panic and said, 'Can you do a Dalek?', and I said in a Daleky voice, 'Of course I can!' He said, 'You've got the job!'
...Someone else was earmarked for Davros, but eventually they decided to have me as I'd done Dalek voices. When acting in a mask you've really got to pay attention to that mask. When you change the shape of your face, very often the shape of your voice changes as well and the face changes everything about the character, and when it's a mask you just take that one stage further.
...I would sit in a wheelchair with a Sainsbury's plastic bag over my head, my theory being that without the bag I might have detracted concentration from my voice. The only way I could move was to wear a kilt - trousers tended to raise my voice an octave! I had to wear gym shoes and paddle like mad with my feet across the studio as quietly as possible!
...The whole script was superb! My goodness, it really was a corker, and what a cast! There wasn't a dud scene in it at all. I remember a piece of dialogue to this day between Peter Miles and Dennis Chinnery; it was electric, utterly electric! I don't think there has been such a good Dalek story since. I hate the new-style mask - it just doesn't do justice to the character of Davros.
...One of the best showmen I've met is John Nathan-Turner. My god, he could sell *anything*, but I don't think his ten years on the

programme was the happiest time in his life, which I think reflected itself in the programme overall.” **- June 1990** ❑

1980 1984

the directors

Peter Grimwade

“*Full Circle* was quite fun to do. Chris Bidmead lives to strive for new ideas, and in commissioning Andrew Smith he also took on an awful lot of work involving rewriting and reshaping of the script. I had to put a lot of hard work into it too.
...On *Logopolis* there was an underlying element of sadness throughout. I think BBC producers are quite often frightened by very charismatic actors, so perhaps the feeling on John Nathan-Turner’s part was that life would be so much easier if Tom was to leave. Tom really pushed his ideas forward, which was one of the lovely things about working with him. He was a mass of energy.
...I enjoyed *Kinda* and found it interesting, though I was very worried during the production that the Doctor was not the central figure, and *Earthshock* was extremely enjoyable to direct, albeit very, very complex. Getting a rhythm and continuity through those very short sequences was so complex that, wherever possible, I used sound effects during the run-through so that the actors knew what the short sequences sounded like on the finished take. I was very happy with the way the entire programme turned out.
...I then turned my hand to writing for the series. I think *Time-Flight* turned out very substandard, and Ian Chesterton, one of the original companions, was the original candidate for a return visit in *Mawdryn Undead*, hence the boys’ school setting.
...*Planet of Fire* was just an excuse for the producer to take his team on a gang-bang and a nice holiday! It didn’t work at all, it’s as simple as that. You don’t just commission a story and set it in Lanzarote just because you want a bloody holiday! That just doesn’t make good economic sense, but there you are! Very often I see my work on the screen all buggered up, but that’s a fact of life!

I did submit one more script after *Planet of Fire* but it was deemed too expensive to realise. When it was turned down I decided to look to the future away from DOCTOR WHO and to do different work.” **- March 1990** ❑

1983 1986

vfx designer

Mike Kelt

“THE FIRST JOB I had as a VFX designer at the BBC was building a Dalek which exploded in *Destiny of the Daleks (1979)*.
...*Enlightenment* (*1983*) cried out for money to be spent on the model stuff. We got hold of some very old models of some of the ships which we used. For Enlightenment itself I thought you couldn’t very well have ‘a harbour in space’, so I deliberately made it a bit ephemeral and out of focus for mystery.
...I then redesigned the TARDIS console for *The Five Doctors*. Basically I was so pissed-off with the crap it was before, and it took a couple of years to persuade them to spend the money. We had to keep the basic idea that it was hexagonal and keep in the door-handle, which we changed away from the red ‘lollipop’.
...I built the lifesize version of Drathro (*The Mysterious Planet, 1986*) on top of a replica of the actor himself who, at the last moment, pulled out. One of the guys from the department did the rest! The Time Lord spaceship was started by carving up a type of styrene foam to a sixth of the finished size, then cast up in fibreglass, multiplied by six, joined together, and then all the detail was added to it.
...The script called for an even more complicated shot than we actually did, with wrecks of spaceships floating gratuitously around. It was all done with computers and, I think, too sophisticated and complicated. We had to cut all sorts of corners but we did it. It could have been better. The motion-control people said they reckoned it was the most complicated motion-controlled move that had ever been shot in Britain - if not in the world! We had horrendous problems getting it to work.
...There is nobody in the BBC who can light a model. I haven’t found one yet. I never feel happy with any of the sci-fi we do at the BBC because it is never done properly. The nearest it has come is this space station for DOCTOR WHO, but even that had compromises made to it to make it work.” **- June 1986** ❑

1984 1986

the companions

Nicola Bryant

“I BASED Peri’s accent on the East Coast of the States where I lived for a while, and on most of my friends there.
...I thought Peri’s first two stories were very good, then I was stuck within the same mould for the next season as the writers didn’t do anything with the character.
...In *The Caves of Androzani* (*1984*) we were trying to make it look hot and it was absolutely freezing! The annoying thing is that when you watch it it does look quite warm! On the other hand, in Spain (*The Two Doctors, 1985*), when we were fighting a temperature of 115°, we were trying to look energized but we all felt really wiped-out from the heat.
...I think the one contention I probably have is costumes for the assistants. It’s sort of trying to be ‘sexy’ and doesn’t really come off. It’s really up to the designer, and John Nathan-Turner of course. I consider that having a primitive woman dressed in leather skins to be far more provocative than the kind of thing I go around in!
...The audience figures were good, contrary to one of the arguments for taking it away. I just could not believe or understand it because we had the scripts, we had plans for the next season. There didn’t seem to be anyone asking ‘Why?’, and anyone getting the right response back. It’s difficult when you are in the show because you can’t voice your own opinion the way you would like to.
...The BBC didn’t inform myself or Colin beforehand. First of all, *The Daily Mirror* rang me and said, ‘Could you comment on the death of DOCTOR WHO?’. I’d just got back from holiday and I thought Colin had been killed!
...I don’t know if I would bare all, certainly not for modelling. It would totally and utterly depend on the script and what you were doing, at the right place and the right time. Personally, I think there’s too much of it, so it would have to be totally justified in my mind.” **- September 1985** ❑

During its first ten years of publication, the award-winning DreamWatch Bulletin published some of the most thorough and, at times, eye-opening interviews with a host of British telefantasy names from both in front of and behind the camera. This follow-up to the critically acclaimed **The DWB Compendium** contains the finest of those interviews under one cover.

Entertainingly re-edited and updated - many by the interviewees themselves - **The DWB Interview File** will provide hours of enjoyable and informative reading, beautifully illustrated with many previously unpublished photographs and professional artwork.

Includes: the complete story of **Doctor Who,** chronologically told by many of its contributors over the years, from its creator Sydney Newman through to the most recent screen Doctor, Sylvester McCoy; the lead actors from **Blake's 7** who discuss the sometimes tense atmosphere behind the scenes of this endearingly popular series; Gerald Harper on the ill-fated Sixties series **Adam Adamant Lives!** **plus** Richard O'Brien on 21 years of **Rocky Horror...**

Also available in this volume:

The DWB Compendium

A fully revised and updated collection of the very best reference material from the first 100 issues of DWB, including *The Power of the Daleks* Photonovel, *Return of the Cybermen,* the definitive guide to **Doctor Who** in the archives, the complete **Blakes 7** merchandise guide, and much more...

"A veritable pot-pourri of information...a fascinating read"

Marvel's DWM